The Mennonite Quarterly Review

29 5145 36 #328

VOLUME XXIV JANUARY 1950 NUMBER ONE

CONTENTS

SPECIAL ANABAPTIST THEOLOGY NUMBER

EDITORIAL 4

PROLEGOMENA TO AN ANABAPTIST THEOLOGY 5
Cornelius Krahn

ANABAPTISM AND PROTESTANTISM 12
Robert Friedmann

THE ANABAPTIST THEOLOGY OF DISCIPLESHIP 25
Harold S. Bender

THE ANABAPTIST DOCTRINE OF THE RESTITUTION OF THE TRUE CHURCH 33
Franklin H. Littell

MENNO SIMONS' THEOLOGY REVIEWED 53
Leonard Verduin

THE DOCTRINAL POSITION OF THE SWISS BRETHREN AS REVEALED IN THEIR POLEMICAL TRACTS 65
John C. Wenger

ANABAPTIST THEOLOGY IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN THEOLOGICAL TRENDS 73
Don. E. Smucker

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AND RESEARCH NOTES 88
RECENT ANABAPTIST BIBLIOGRAPHIES
Harold S. Bender
RECENT RESEARCH IN AMISH HYMN TUNES
John Umble

BOOK REVIEWS 94
Cornelius Krahn, *Menno Simons (1496-1561) Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Theologie der Taufgesinnten*
Reviewed by Harold S. Bender
Joseph W. Yoder, *Amische Lieder*
Reviewed by Mary Oyer

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v.24
1950

EDITORIAL

SPECIAL ANABAPTIST THEOLOGY NUMBER

WE ARE HAPPY TO PRESENT IN THIS NUMBER SEVEN ARTICLES ON ANABAPTIST THEOLOGY. They constitute the papers read at a special seminar on Anabaptist Theology held at the Goshen College Biblical Seminary, May 14, 1949, probably the first such meeting of its kind ever held. Five of the papers are by authorities on early Anabaptism and represent either carefully documented studies on specialized topics in early Anabaptist history or serious attempts to set forth the essential elements in Anabaptist thought. One paper, that by Professor Don. Smucker, seeks to relate the essence of the Anabaptist vision to the current theological scene, at the same time subjecting it to somewhat of a critique. The paper on Menno Simons is a contribution by a Calvinist scholar who has just finished a new translation of *Menno Simons Complete Works* into English and takes a fresh but friendly look at Menno with considerable benefit to the Mennonites who were listening in. There was no attempt in the seminar at a systematic coverage of all the aspects and unsolved problems of Anabaptist theology, nor at an integration of the results of the papers and the accompanying discussion, although several of the readers revised their original papers substantially before final publication, taking into account the criticisms offered.

It is evident from the papers read at the seminar and here published that both the understanding of the original theology of the Anabaptists as well as its orientation into the contemporary situation are unfinished tasks. One major reason for this is the incomplete mastery of the sources by those who are attempting the task. But another reason is that the modern descendants of the Anabaptists are no longer always in living connection with their theological ancestry, and some of them have become so involved in modern theological trends, whether fundamentalistic and pietistic or otherwise that they have lost their center of orientation. Now it may not be necessary nor possible for modern "Anabaptists" to reproduce their spiritual heritage in identical form or even in full content, but they of all Christians must at least understand this heritage, this Anabaptist "theology," and make its values function today. It is the conviction of the members of the seminar with the possible exception of the Calvinist member, that there are genuine and precious values in the Anabaptist vision which are not just historical relics but which have to do with the very heart of true Christianity, i.e., the Christianity of the New Testament, and that they are most valuable just for the present age. They have contributed their papers not only or even primarily as historians but as active and responsible members of the Christian church of the Anabaptist persuasion (although one is a Methodist) and as a contribution to a re-vivifying and fresh and vitalizing understanding and appreciation of the best in Anabaptist thought for current consumption. It is evident from the content of the papers that they do not wholly agree in their attempt to interpret Anabaptism, but they do unite in the fervent hope that the great New Testament truths so freshly grasped and sincerely lived by the Anabaptists of four hundred years ago may have a wider and deeper adoption today both within and without the Mennonite brotherhood.

If the hopes of the original sponsors are fulfilled annual meetings of the Seminar on Anabaptist theology, or its equivalent, will follow. These meetings should produce further papers for publication in the REVIEW. The second meeting of the seminar will be held at the Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Chicago in late April, 1950.

WITH THE FIRST NUMBER OF ITS 1950 VOLUME THE REVIEW INAUGURATES AN ENLARGED and much needed service in the reporting and digesting of current research and publications in the field of Anabaptist-Mennonite history, theology and sociology. See the statement at the heading of the new section on page 86. The size of the journal will be increased substantially from the present average of 64 pages per issue to an average of 80 pages. In addition to the enlarged bibliographical and reporting service, one additional article will be added to each issue. We have confidence that an increased readership will help us to carry the additional cost of publication involved in this expansion.

The Mennonite Quarterly Review

Vol. XXIV No. 1

PROLEGOMENA TO AN ANABAPTIST THEOLOGY

CORNELIUS KRAHN

"Fortunately the publications of source material pertaining to the history of the Anabaptists are numerous. Numerous also are the investigations of individual leaders and the history of provinces and cities in connection with Anabaptism. But the leading thought of Anabaptism, its theology, the Anabaptist principle, or whatever one would call the systematic treatment of the subject has fallen somewhat short in comparison to the historical investigations." These are the words of Walter Köhler some years ago.[1]

Anabaptist research has made great progress during the last century, limited mainly, however, to historical and sociological investigations. In the field of systematic theological research we are still in the preliminary state. Therefore let us briefly consider:

I. Why Is Research in Anabaptist Theology Lagging?

The early Anabaptist leaders did not formulate their doctrines and beliefs in systematic statements like the Lutherans in their *Loci communes* and the Calvinists in their *Institutes*. They did not even produce generally accepted confessions of faith. Most of the doctrinal statements of the sixteenth century Anabaptists are personal expressions of faith which did not gain general recognition. Further-

[1] W. Köhler, "Die Verantwortung im Täufertum des 16. Jahrhunderts," *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter,* (August, 1940) 10.

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more they are merely fragments of a total system consisting of a few articles of faith only. As an example, we cite the Schleitheim articles.

However, it should be clear by now that the absence of a theological system in the form of creeds, confessions of faith, and catechisms among the sixteenth century Anabaptists is not evidence of antagonism toward nor of lack of interest in the formulation of their basic Christian beliefs. It merely proves that they had no opportunity nor leisure to pursue these endeavors during the times of severe persecution. All their statements in the realm of doctrines, faith, and ethics were born in an emergency. The Schleitheim articles of 1527 illustrate the point.[2] During the formulation and discussion of these articles the Swiss Brethren neither mentioned nor denied all the doctrines which they shared fully with other Christians. During this emergency situation they took time only to formulate those in which they differed. These articles, therefore, are fragments of a system and not the whole of which the early leaders were very much aware even though it was unformulated and unwritten. The basic and generally accepted Christian doctrines concerning God, creation, sin, redemption, Christ, etc., are not even mentioned. They are taken for granted. However, those doctrines that are mentioned and emphasized may have a certain bearing on those not mentioned and may modify the same occasionally.

The lack of the early Anabaptist formulation of a complete system of theology accounts partly for the fact that even in our day we have not yet developed a complete system of doctrines and ethical concepts of early Anabaptism.

What originally was left undone because of lack of opportunity was hard to make up for when the movement was deprived of its leadership during the severe persecution. Especially in central Europe the Mennonites became predominantly a rural people whose interest did not center in the formulation of doctrines or speculative contemplations. They became a "practical" pious folk. A condition caused by an emergency became a *status quo* and an integral part of their way of life. This observation can, however, be made also in other respects. For example, the absence of church buildings among some of the most conservative among them even in our day is an illustration of this tendency. Originally the construction of church buildings was prohibited, then it became an accepted practice.

[2] John C. Wenger, "The Schleitheim Confession of Faith," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review,* XIX (October, 1945) 243.

The Mennonites of Holland were an exception to the above. Here persecution ceased earliest, and these people were by no means only rural. They had a strong urban intellectual leadership during the latter part of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Numerous confessions of faith, catechisms, and systems of theology were produced. The writing of devotional literature flourished.[3] This literature is still basic for conservative Mennonitism the world over. And yet only a fragment of this wealth of literature has been used by modern scholars of Anabaptist theology. This is true not only for German and American scholars who are usually handicapped by language difficulties, but also for the Dutch scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. One of the main reasons for the latter is the following: The Dutch Mennonites became involved in a national Calvinist struggle in which one extreme Calvinist group emphasized orthodoxy or the *leer* (doctrines) while the other stressed Christian living or *leven*. The Mennonites aligned themselves with the latter group and thus they not only lost their original interest in theological formulations but at times even became quite opposed to all doctrinal statements.

Thus we answer the question "Why is research in Anabaptist theology lagging?" by stating that originally there was lack of opportunity for doctrinal formulations and later on the interest in purely theological questions was weakened. When the general scholarly interest in the "stepchildren" of Christendom, the Anabaptists, developed, it was only natural that scholars would, first of all, pay attention to the historical aspect of this movement. But now the time has come when scholars are beginning to investigate the basic beliefs and doctrines of Anabaptism. Let us name some preliminary tasks in this connection.

II. Some Essential Preliminaries.

Just as the historians, having collected fragments of sixteenth century Anabaptist history, have gradually succeeded in presenting a more or less complete picture of the historical background and development in the various countries, so we must now with united effort collect all the materials that have bearing on the theological views of the early Anabaptists. Much has been done, but not enough to present a complete, systematic theology of sixteenth century Anabaptism.

Studies of the theological views of men like Menno Simons,

[3] Cornelius Krahn, "The Historiography of the Mennonites in the Netherlands," *Church History,* XIII (September, 1944) 203, and *M.Q.R.,* XVIII (October, 1944) 195.

Conrad Grebel, Hans Denk, and others have been made.[4] Investigations concerning certain doctrines of the Anabaptists in some areas have been made, such as nonresistance, but no one has recently attempted to integrate all theological and ethical concepts of Anabaptism of the various countries into a composite whole like this has been done in the field of history, for example by C. Henry Smith in *The Story of the Mennonites*. Such an attempt would at this time, very likely, be premature.

Much hard spade work has to be done before the above can be attempted satisfactorily. Many sources, published and unpublished, need careful investigation. Exceptionally valuable sources for this purpose are the following religious debates between the Anabaptists and their opponents: the Zofingen, Frankenthal, Emden, and Leeuwarden discussions which appeared in print. A wealth of material can be found in Dutch catechisms, creeds, and the devotional and systematic theological writings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries of which only a few have been investigated for this purpose. There are also the writings of Pilgram Marpeck.

There is a great need for united effort and a co-ordination of all these investigations in Europe and America. We here in America are especially challenged by the numerous recent European publications dealing with the theological position of the Anabaptists. We will have to make a careful study of the books by U. Bergfried, Fritz Heyer, J. H. Wessel, and others.[5]

In this connection we should call attention to the most complete bibliographies and reviews of Anabaptist literature. E. Teufel, Germany, started during the last war a series of installments in *Theologische Rundschau* under the title "Täufertum and Quäkertum im Lichte der neueren Forschung."[6] W. Köhler, Heidelberg, published "Das Täufertum in der neueren kirchenhistorischen Forschung" in *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*.[7] They place special emphasis on theological writings. Let us now consider:

[4] Cornelius Krahn, *Menno Simons* (1496-1561). *Ein Betrag zur Geschichte und Theologie der Taufgesinnten.* (Karlsruhe i.B., 1936); Harold S. Bender, *Conrad Grebel, Founder of the Swiss Brethren,* (Goshen, Indiana, 1950); Otto Erich Vittali, *Die Theologie des Wiedertäufers Hans Denck* (Offenburg, 1932).

[5] Ulrich Bergfried, *Verantwortung als theologisches Problem im Täufertum des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Wuppertal-Elberfeld, 1938). Fritz Heyer, *Der Kirchenbegriff der Schwärmer* (Leipzig, 1939). J. H. Wessel, *De leerstellige strijd tusschen Nederlandsche Gereformeerden en Doopsgezinden in de zestiende eeuw.* (Assen, 1947).

[6] Vol. 13 (1941), Nos. 1-6; Vol. 14 (1942), Nos. 1-4, Vol. 17 (1948) No. 2.

[7] Vol. 37 (1940) No. 1; Vol. 38 (1941); Vol. 40 (1943), No. 1; Vol. 41 (1948) No. 1.

III. Some Cornerstones of an Anabaptist Theology.

1. The Scriptural Approach

Protestantism in breaking away from the Catholic church made the Scriptures the sole rule and authority of faith. And yet there is a difference in the degree in which this break with the Catholic church occurred and in the manner in which the Scriptures became the sole guide. Anglicanism adhered quite closely to the Catholic tradition. Greater is the break in the case of Lutheranism, with Zwinglianism and Calvinism coming next. Most radical in their break with the Catholic tradition and in their claim that the Scriptures are the sole authority were the Anabaptists. This applies in the area of doctrines, of worship, Christian life, and organization. So radical was the break with traditional Catholicism that they even placed little emphasis on the classical Christian creeds such as the Apostolic Creed. It is true they found no fault with the creed and did not deny it, but being a part of the Catholic tradition and ritual it was neglected. (Where in our day is there a Mennonite congregation reciting the Apostolic Creed each Sunday as it is done in churches of many other denominations?) In worship they abolished the ritual, in administration they established a simple brotherhood pattern, in doctrines and Christian living they wished to be nothing but Scriptural.

2. The New Testament Approach.

Anabaptism is more closely related to Calvinism in its Biblical emphasis than to Lutheranism and yet there are differences not only in the use of the Bible and its authority but also in the approach to it. Both accept the Bible as the Word of God and the final authority. Calvinism approaches the Bible as a whole, a revealed unit, while Anabaptism views the whole from the New Testament. The Old Testament is preparatory to the New Testament. With Christ they emphasized "Ye have heard . . . , but I say unto you." For Menno Simons, Moses and "his sword" had made their contribution now that Christ had come. The Anabaptist approach to the Bible is therefore Christ- and New Testament-centered. According to a study made by Ellis Graber, Menno Simons quotes in the first part of his *Complete Works* the Old Testament 290 times and the New Testament 740 times.[8] For the Anabaptist the Old Testament is in force and the divine authority as far as it is in harmony with the New Testament. For the Calvinist the law of the Old Testa-

[8] Ellis Graber, "Menno Simons and the Scriptures," 1944, (A paper on file in the Historical Library, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas).

ment has to be preached continually in order to prepare the sinner for the acceptance of the grace of God as revealed in the New Testament.

Additional characteristics of Anabaptist theology in which it differed from traditional Catholicism and the reformers could be enumerated. However, let us turn now to the basic theological concern of Anabaptists which furnishes a key to the understanding of their doctrines, beliefs, and practices. This is their peculiar concept of the church or the community of saints.

3. The Anabaptist Concept of the Church.

Each of the reformers, like a composer of a symphony, had a special *Leitmotiv* that recurred again and again; each of them had a basic experience which became the keynote of the movement or of his theological system. Let us make a brief comparison.

Luther's struggle for a gracious God came to an end when he found Him in his study of the Scriptures through "faith alone." This experience set a world afire; and it remained the focal point through which he viewed the Scriptures, formulated his doctrines, and fought his opponents. The traditional doctrines and practices which he kept were modified from this point of view. That man is saved by "faith alone" was the cornerstone of Lutheranism.

For Calvin the overwhelming experience was the sovereignty of God who woos and wins the sinners irresistibly. For a Mennonite this is a harsh predestinarian view by which God brings the individual, who is far away and incapable of reaching Him, into harmony with Himself, to keep him and have him do the works of grace which God prepared for him. And yet there is a similarity between the Anabaptist and Calvinist ethical emphasis even though the former is more New Testament oriented. Calvinism views the Bible, man, salvation, etc., more as if it were from the divine point of view, emphasizing the objective act in salvation, while Anabaptism stresses more the human angle, the subjective.

As the Lutheran's central concern is to find God through "faith alone," and the Calvinist's chief duty is to do the will of a sovereign God, so does the Anabaptist also have a chief theological concern. It centers around the *ecclesia*—the church or the body of believers. As in the times of the early Christian church, sinners are called out of a world of sin and doom to gather around Christ, the risen and coming Lord. The Anabaptists are not merely concerned to save individuals, but also to keep them in the fellowship of saints—the body of the Lord—without blemish till the Lord will come again.

An Anabaptist theology is *ecclesio-centric.* It is true, Anabaptism had individualists emphasizing the personal mystical bond between the saved soul and God. On the periphery of Anabaptism there were even some emphasizing individual piety to the degree of neglecting an organized fellowship of saints, e.g., Hans Denk. But those were exceptions. Anabaptism as a whole placed a definite and strong emphasis on the closely knit brotherhood united in one spirit, one mind, and one way of life and doctrines.

This Anabaptist theology accepts all the traditional basic Christian doctrines of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, man, sin, salvation, etc. However, some are modified because of the great emphasis placed on the *ecclesia.*

Thus from the characteristically Anabaptist concept of the church issue a number of other precepts of the movement. They center around a peculiar—or Biblical—concept of the church and an attempt of its realization in a sinful and hostile world. The following is a brief outline of the same: *The Anabaptist Church Concept and Its Realization.* I. The realization of the church in a sinful world (1) by calling sinners out of the world into the fellowship of believers (2) by baptizing believers only (3) by becoming members of one body—Christ, which finds expression in (a) a mutual concern and (b) an observance of the Lord's Supper. II. The maintenance of the church in a hostile world (1) by keeping sin and the world out of the church through church discipline by the use of (a) the ban and (b) avoidance (2) by a critical attitude toward the world which finds expression in (a) aggressive mission work and (b) the practice of nonconformity.

These are only a few of the essentials from which again other characteristics developed.

In conclusion let us repeat that in order to understand and evaluate the early Anabaptist theology we will in some way have to keep this *ecclesio-centric* approach in mind. In our individualistic age this fact has been somewhat neglected. The scholar's obligation is not to place the ideas and beliefs of his day into the sixteenth century but to present the age which he describes as it was.

After this it is our task to determine whether and to what degree these concepts can be accepted and realized in our day. The vistas in this field are full of anticipation, adventure, challenge, and hard labor. Let us therefore go ahead!

ANABAPTISM AND PROTESTANTISM

ROBERT FRIEDMANN

Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. James 1:22.

This is a remarkable situation: more than four hundred years after the beginning of the Anabaptist movement we have come together to find out what kind of theology Anabaptists and Mennonites actually have. Here in Goshen we witness a fine center of traditional Mennonitism, with traditional Sunday service, seminary work, research, and so on, yet in spite of all that it is not quite clear to anyone among us what exactly the theological essence of Anabaptism is. We have heard the call "back to the founding fathers," but what does this imply, what part of their teachings is to be revived? On the other hand, what shall we teach to our young students, and what preach to our congregations if we are not agreed upon the theological foundations of this church? Anabaptist and Mennonite sources are scarce, little known, and even less understood. No small wonder that under the vital impact of the surrounding Christian environment Mennonitism has drifted more and more toward a general Protestant pattern not too much different from that of any Protestant denomination. Academic Protestant theology is taught in Mennonite schools, and Sunday sermons show little if any specific Mennonite flavor. Certainly, in practical work in community and relief Mennonites endeavor to do their utmost, following their tradition of "practical Christianity," yet even here we must be cautious lest we miss the specific genius of the great Anabaptist tradition. How easy to fail in its interpretation, be it because we are so used to the general pattern or because we are anxious to prove above all the creedal orthodoxy of Anabaptism and Mennonitism. This was, for instance, the case with Gerhard Roosen (d. 1712) in his *Gemütsgesprach* and *Unschuld und Gegenbericht* (1702), or, nearer to us, with John Horsch (d. 1941) who knew his history so well and yet missed somewhat the genius of Anabaptism, transforming its faith into a kind of modern "Fundamentalism."[1]

It is beyond discussion that in all basic points of theology Anabaptists and Mennonites are good Biblical Christians, and no *Schwärmer* (fanatics) as Luther and after him most Lutheran schol-

[1] John Horsch, "Faith of the Swiss Brethren," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, IV (1930) and V (1931) reprinted in *Mennonites of Europe* (1942.)

ars (e.g., Karl Holl) have claimed them to be. The articles of faith concerning God, Christ, Trinity, fall of man, atonement, and final resurrection, are strictly accepted by any Anabaptist and Mennonite, and were never doubted. Confessions of faith and catechisms prove it unequivocally in spite of many a slander. But then is Anabaptism nothing but just this general Biblical Protestantism plus a few practical injunctions such as nonresistance, nonswearing of oaths, and so on?[2] Did the great forebears suffer martyrdom just for this and nothing else? And why did they not say so from the very start? Two answers to this puzzle of Anabaptist thought offer themselves and have actually been proposed more than once. First: there was so much persecution going on that the brethren simply did not find time or rest to explicitly draw up their theology, and likewise did not find printers to publish such tracts or books. Second: Anabaptism was basically a lay movement of unlearned men usually of the lower strata of society who were willing to do their share but were not able to vindicate their position by an elaborate system of theology.

I am afraid that this is too simple an answer which misses completely the spiritual climate of the great beginning. I say emphatically "no" to any such explanation. True, Anabaptists were heavily persecuted, but we know that this fact did not hinder them to produce a large amount of religious literature, such as the famous Schleitheim articles of 1527, Riedemann's *Rechenschaft* of 1545, many disputations in Switzerland and Germany, big codices of Hutterite origin containing tracts, confessions, epistles, histories, and what not, from everywhere. As for printing: had not Menno Simons his own press, did not pamphlets circulate in South and North, later collected in the *Martyrs' Mirror* and the *Güldene Aepffel in Silbern Schalen* (1702)? If Anabaptists had felt it a central concern to draw up their particular theology they certainly would have done so as many other groups and individuals have done (e.g., Karlstadt, Schweckfeld, a.s.o.). Persecution rather stimulates than prevents literary testimonies. Think of early Christianity.

As for lack of educated men: had not Menno Simons been a learned priest, and had not Conrad Grebel studied at universities? And was Pilgram Marpeck not a learned man who found time to produce several great books, one of which has more than five hundred pages folio size in manuscript, most cleverly defending the Anabaptist position against Schwenckfeld? And even simple breth-

[2] This is about the position of the majority of the Mennonites in Germany today.

ren were not slow in presenting their case whenever called upon. Read the epistles and tracts of Anabaptist brethren which have come to light—how keen-minded they were in debates with learned priests or judges. No, they had their great spiritual leaders and knew very well what they were standing for. It was certainly more than a literal Biblicism of orthodox Protestant type plus a few strange practices. Luther and Zwingli must have felt this deeper difference, hence the persecution.

For all these reasons we must start with a more thorough analysis of our problem than has been done heretofore. To this end I propose to develop the thesis that Anabaptism must not be considered as a form of Protestantism, not even as its "Left-Wing" (Bainton), though Anabaptism arose in Central Europe at exactly the same period as Protestantism at large. Anabaptism, I claim, is as little Protestantism as is Quakerism in the Anglo-Saxon countries.[3] Unless we understand this basic distinction we bar our vision from the full grasp of the Anabaptist genius. It might be that this is the reason why so little essential has been said up to now regarding Anabaptist thought, and why nearly every Protestant scholar has misinterpreted Anabaptism. But how do I claim that Anabaptists have an essentially different theology from Protestantism, the latter taken as a whole against the background of Catholicism? Are not Anabaptists as "non-Catholics" automatically part of the great Protestant family, today converging more and more towards a general pattern? Do they not accept the orthodox articles of faith? Are they not as Biblical as all the Protestant denominations around us?

A deeper analysis is still pending and I shall try to prepare the ground for it as well as I understand it, taking as my start the antithesis of Anabaptism and Protestantism. First of all let us discuss what we mean by the term "theology." The answer can be twofold: theology may mean a system of doctrines, propositions, and arguments, which can be written down, and will be studied and discussed in a more or less intellectual fashion. The Lutheran and the Reformed churches have such systematic theologies; in fact they excel in this field.[4] It is quite obvious that Anabaptism and Mennonitism have nothing to offer like that, to be sure not for lack of men or time but for some other reasons not yet understood. Theology, however, can also mean a general spiritual attitude towards the basic issues

[3] Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York, 1929). On p. 39 he claims that "Quakerism is the Anglo-Saxon parallel to [continental] Anabaptism."

[4] Good examples in our times are the works by Reinhold Niebuhr and Karl Barth.

of Christianity and Christian life, never systematically developed but intuitively grasped and pursued. I shall call this an *"implied"* theology—somewhat in the way that everyone has an "implied" philosophy of life—and it is exclusively in this wider sense that we are deliberating today on the subject of Anabaptist theology.

The second point I wish to develop deals with the essential meaning of the term "Protestantism" (other than merely indicating its non-Catholic character). Today there is hardly time nor is this the proper place to enter into a prolonged essay on this intriguing topic, but several salient points are not too difficult to distinguish.[5] Protestantism begins with Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin. All three were outstanding (systematic) theologians who gave their churches decisive directions, different in detail but similar in principle. To make this similarity manifest we might best begin with a few words concerning the Catholic church. This great church might be well characterized by its "sacerdotal" nature: the priest is the very center of this holy institution, and his prime duty is the dispensation of grace by means of the seven holy sacraments. There is much theology implied, but theology is certainly not the center of Catholicism. In declining this type of Christian church, the Protestant Reformers put all their concern and emphasis upon a way of salvation independent of such a reliance upon sacraments. Their strength and their answer was theology rather than liturgy: theology of salvation "by faith alone," and all that follows from this first principle. The Protestant churches are then by and large "theological" churches. Theology is their center. The main duty of the minister (no priest) is the theological exposition of the Word of God from the pulpit. While according to Catholic teaching sin can be washed away in the sacraments of Baptism and of Penance, and man can be fortified against sin by the sacrament of the Eucharist, Protestants of any denomination are aware of man's hopeless and futile struggle against his inherent sinfulness from which there is no release. Hence the teachings of justification or atonement through the blood of Christ in whom alone man can trust and upon whom alone they

[5] Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era* (Chicago, 1948), approaches his subject, the "Spirit of Protestantism," from a quite unhistoric angle, analyzing, so to speak, the "ideal type" of Protestantism as such. To him the Protestant is always in a "border situation" between here and yonder, belief and unbelief, etc.; there is never that absolute certainty which is so characteristic of Catholicism (authoritarianism) since every Protestant is a free and independent believer without any help. Tillich sees in Protestantism the eternal unrest of the soul—not its finding the place of repose. It seems to me that this interpretation is fairly accurate for present-day liberal Protestantism with its "modernistic" sophistication. It is, however, by no means a fitting picture of traditional Protestantism of the Lutheran or Reformed type. We will not use his analysis further on.

can rely. Classic Protestants generally are aware that they will remain lifelong miserable sinners, with slight chance of essential improvement. An old Zurich catechism of the eighteenth century asks the child, "What does man deserve?" and promptly answers, succinctly but to the point, "Eternal Hell." And another old book exclaims, "O thou Adam, what hast thou done! For though it was thou that sinned, thou art not fallen alone but we all that come of thee."[6] Absolute depravity of man is the presupposition of this theology. Hence, no moral goodness is possible to man in his strength alone. Sin and salvation by faith are the two main pillars of Protestant theology. Practical life is, even in Reformed circles, generally a far cry from anything resembling genuine Christian discipleship, so clearly commanded in the Gospels but now thought to be an impossible demand. Man is and remains a sinner who cannot do good. Particularly Luther was so extremely suspicious regarding the possibility of "merits" in good deeds—a main point of Catholic teachings—that he would not even consider a way of practicing Christian virtues. His well known dictum, *Pecca fortiter* (sin steadfastly), speaks clearly in this direction, intimating: do not pretend to be holy lest you become a hypocrite.[7] The same is true also within the family of Reformed churches in spite of their puritanical practices. Calvinism is not less a theological church than Lutheranism.

As we now search for the background of this Protestant theology we find no less a name than St. Augustine as the true originator of these ideas. Indeed, both Luther and Calvin are in their teachings basically Augustinian, and Pauline only as far as Paul fits into this Augustinian system of Christian doctrines. The main ideas borrowed from the great bishop of Hippo are these: original sin (which prevents man from being pure), man's complete depravity (which prevents us from being really good), unfree will, and predestination—hence salvation (of the elect) by faith alone. This is

[6] Robert Friedmann, *Mennonite Piety Through the Centuries* (Goshen, Ind., 1949), p. 145.

[7] In a letter to his friend Melanchthon Martin Luther writes, ". . . Be a sinner and sin vigorously, but more vigorously believe and rejoice in Christ. . . " (Enders, *Luther's Briefwechsel* III, 208). To undergird my thesis I present here two more quotations from Lutheran theological writings. I take them purposely from continental works since Anabaptism had to face only this type of theology. "Die Bergpredigt fordert Unmögliches, und sie zur Norm des innerweltlichen Handelns machen wollen bedeutet deshalb nicht nur etwas Aussichtsloses tun sondern ihren Charakter als Skandalon (Ärgernis) verkennen," *Theologische Blätter*, 1924, 81;—"In der Paradoxie der absoluten Forderung erfassen wir die ganze Metaphysik der Armseligkeit und Not, die auf allem Menschentum liegt" (Gerhard Kittel, 1926). These quotations express very well the typical skepticism of theologians regarding the possibility of a radical moral conduct of life. Karl Barth, today, belongs to the same line, though he belongs to the Reformed variety of Protestantism.

classic orthodox Protestantism even today (forgetting in this context later holiness movements such as Pietism) with all its inner uncertainty and its restless search for the final repose (Tillich). Kingdom of God, discipleship, sanctification of life, brotherhood—such ideas do not belong into the denominational church bodies of Protestantism, all of which take their foundations in theology. It may be that I have overdrawn the picture here and there for purpose of contrast, particularly in view of present-day American "liberal" Protestantism, but in principle every Protestant would agree that this is, generally speaking, his belief. Anything beyond it smacks of *Schwärmertum* and fanaticism, or of sectarianism, or of liberalism and the social gospel. Man can do no good, yea, he cannot even endeavor genuine discipleship (without hypocrisy), for he is a sinful creature. Theology then, in the present context, is the only way out, opening the door to a possible salvation undeserved though it is. Life is and remains a failure, a scandal. Paul's warning that a Christian should be a "co-worker with God" (I Cor. 3:9) has not found its proper place in this vision.[8] It is well to remember that also the Fundamentalists of today are following this line just as much as any old orthodox Protestant, and by this decidedly weakening their witness in a semipagan world around us. Finally, this theology of salvation "by faith alone" led to the emotional reactions (and variations) of Protestantism, Pietism and Revivalism. It is more a faith believed than a faith to be lived.

And now let us turn to a discussion of Anabaptism (including Mennonitism) by way of contrast. Anabaptism, too, is opposed to the sacerdotal concept of the church; it, too, accepts the Bible as its sole guide, understanding it very literally; it, too, believes in salvation by faith. But its emphasis lies more in the Gospel spirit than in that of the Pauline theology. To say it very succinctly: *the Anabaptists are non-Augustinians.* That makes all the difference. To be certain, "non-Augustinianism" means by far not Pelagianism (or, for that, Arminianism, i.e., Pelagianism within Reformed theology), namely the doctrine of absolute freedom of will. This doctrine is more a humanistic (idealistic) concern than a Biblical one. And Anabaptists do not teach such "humanistic" free will even though they believe in a practical Christianity where the doing of God's will is—under God's grace—an unquestioned possibility.

Anabaptists, to be true, were not steeped in scholastic learning,

[8] It is true that the Puritan fathers tried to live a model life of innerworldly asceticism—as Max Weber has called it, but it was certainly very different from Christian discipleship. It had more the spirit of the Old than that of the New Testament.

had a very sporadic knowledge of the teachings of the church fathers, never went to theological schools (save for a few converted priests in the earliest beginnings), but they were keen-minded student of the Scriptures. The Bible, however, is primarily not a theological book but a book of life. Anabaptists did not content themselves by discovering in it words of comfort for the fallen man and the good tidings of redemption, but they found also very concrete commandments, advice, calls, to go and try the new life. It meant nothing pietistic (holiness idea) but the vision of the "narrow path" to be walked, which, though dangerous, nevertheless is the only path of hope. They took God's Word in its entirety, His encouragements as well as His ordinances. Two steps are marked out in this direction (making any Arminian theology meaningless): (a) inner rebirth and (b) the new covenant.

The idea of rebirth Anabaptists share, of course, with many other Christian groups, such as Puritans and Pietists.[9] Still, it is the very beginning of this new venture, the reaching of a new level of insight and vision unknown to the unregenerated ones. One could call it "conversion," which, however, is meaningful only in a "gathered" church and not in an institutional denomination. On this new ground the believer enters into a concrete covenant with his God by way of baptism. "Baptism," says I Peter 3:21, "is the covenant of a *good conscience* with God."[10] This "good conscience" is completely foreign to any Lutheran, generally any orthodox Protestant, who becomes suspicious of false self-righteousness with such a belief. Because of this basic approach Anabaptists are occasionally (but rightly) called "covenant people" (Franklin Littell, following an idea by Champlin Burrage). It describes their position very adequately. Covenant implies a total earnestness in the understanding of God's Word without any escape. "Take up the cross, and follow me."

It is our claim, then, that the brethren stayed aloof from too much theological speculation (mainly of the Augustinian type) not because of lack of capable men or lack of leisure, and least of all not

[9] Though Calvinists teach also a "common grace" available apart from any regeneration.

[10] This is the favorite text among Anabaptists and can be found in numerous tracts and epistles of the sixteenth century. The English version of the text has "answer" instead of "covenant" *(Bund)*, hence the entire "covenant-theology" of Anabaptism remains less lucid to someone used to the King James Bible. Dutch Mennonites prefer Menno Simons' favorite text, I Cor. 3:11, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Finally the Amish favor the text I Pet. 1:3f, the "great inheritance" dictum, which is cited time and again in their Sunday sermons. The I Pet. 3:21 text is typical for sixteenth century Anabaptism only.

because of a certain "theological nonchalance" as the reproach occasionally runs,[11] but because of a different sort of Christian concern. Luther asked, "How do I find a gracious God?" and found the answer, "by faith alone"; Calvin asked, "How do I know that I belong to the elect?" and found the answer in a puritanic discipline which was mostly of an unchristian harshness. Both Reformers doubted the possibility of a Christian life of discipleship, hence found all their strength in a theological system which centers around the antithesis of "sin and salvation."

It is strange that just this core of all Protestantism is, if not absent altogether in Anabaptism, at least rather marginal in it. Certainly, every Anabaptist and Mennonite knows his state of being in sin. There is not one Anabaptist writer who would claim to be sinless or to be no longer able to sin (as pietists occasionally claim). No, that contention is a slander of the opponents of four hundred years ago, leading to the derogative classification of Anabaptists as fanatics and antinomians. Nothing is further from Anabaptism than that. But rebirth and baptism are meaningful only if they are followed by a concrete attempt actually to walk that "narrow path." Once a Christian is on this way he no longer worries about sin. He is trying, under God, to obey His commandments. Amish sermons often close with the typical form, *Dass Gott der Herr mit uns zufrieden sei, . . .* Such a man is certain that God will not allow him to fall out of His grace.

Such a teaching might sound foreign to the theological mind, may even appear preposterous, but from all available evidence it must be taken that Anabaptists had this attitude. It explains their "theological aloofness" rooting in the concern of the Anabaptists not primarily for an intellectual (theological) answer to man's anxiety but for a concrete Christianity to be lived, or, to use a modern term, a concern for an EXISTENTIAL CHRISTIANITY.

That does not mean self-righteousness, even less Arminianism, it means no Schwärmertum (fanaticism), and above all it means no *Werkheiligkeit* (religion by works) and no pietistic holiness. Neither does it mean a stiff legalism. There is no other way out but that Anabaptism represents a new type of Christian life definitely not within the scope of historical Protestantism. That is why the Reformers could not grasp the Anabaptist position and therefore per-

[11] This lesser concern of Anabaptists for theological issues misled the Jesuit scholar Dunin-Borkowsky to claim that most Anabaptists were in fact "anti-Trinitarians," a completely unprovable contention. Anabaptists were doctrinally very strict as was said at the outset in this paper.

secuted these strange believers under the pretext of "Schwärmerei." The theological problem of freedom of the will (or vice versa predestination) does not exist, strictly speaking, in Anabaptist and Mennonite thought. God has given commandments to be obeyed, and directions to be followed; that is the "existential situation" of an earnest Christian who faces a task rather than a problem. What then about sin, man's ever stumbling and failing? In the first place, children have no sin, but only an inclination to it. In the second place, adults are standing under permanent temptation but, through the grace of rebirth, can fight it, together with like-minded brethren, and endeavor to conquer it, that is, to withstand and forsake it. To this end one thing matters most: the conscious separation from the world, and the refusal of compromises. In this regard Anabaptism almost converges toward monasticism, yet in contrast to it stays in the world carrying on a normal life with family[12] and profession. Once this radical step is taken, the crushing consciousness of being helplessly sinful dissolves altogether. "Our conscience is free, pure, and unburdened," says Jeronimus Käls, the Hutterite schoolmaster, during his trial in Vienna, 1536, which led to his execution: "We bear no vengeance and evil thought in our hearts against anyone. Upon this we are ready to suffer gladly, cheerfully, and with great patience, whatever God may allow you to do with us."[13]

The difference from all fanatics, enthusiasts and Schwärmer becomes obvious. They, too, talk of holiness and sanctification of life (as also pietists usually do) but they do not establish their faith on Biblical grounds and not in view of a genuine *Gemeinde* (fellowship). Fanatics are mostly antinomians, and the concept of obedience is unknown to them. Anabaptists, on the contrary, are Biblicists, and begin not in isolation but within a *Gemeinde* (brotherhood). That Luther and the Lutherans misunderstood this difference created a most tragic situation in the history of Christian realization. Today this should be clear to us, and be made unequivocal to the outsider. That the Anabaptists had no elaborate theology

[12] Of course, the brethren were aware that entering married life involves a certain amount of "worldly interests" as compared with the ideal of celibacy practiced in Catholic monasticism. Yet this is what the brethren had to answer to this issue: "God winks at our marital work because of our perishable body and also on behalf of the children, and does not reckon it upon those who act in fear and discipline" (note this precondition of all innerworldly asceticism). Lydia Müller, *Glaubenszeugnisse Oberdeutscher Taufgesinnter, Leipzig,* 1938, p. 228 (*Ulrich Stadler's Sendbrief* of the year 1536).

[13] Lydia Müller, *loc. cit.,* p. 210.

has its deep reason, but it was not due to theological indifference or confusion.

What then is the center of Anabaptist thought and life? This question has not yet been answered although we have touched it more than once. In studying the great controversies in the history of Anabaptism it becomes most evident that there was a very clear center from which no sixteenth century leader ever deviated. Conrad Grebel made it vocal in his famous letter to Thomas Müntzer (1524), the Swiss Brethren were clear on it in their different disputations with the Zwinglian preachers (Zofingen, Basel, Berne), Dirk Philips was quite outspoken in the famous Adam Pastor case, but above all the difference between existential and theological Christianity becomes apparent in the antagonism of two outstanding men in Moravia: Jakob Hutter and Dr. Balthasar Hubmaier. Following a hint by Franz Heimann, [14] I plan to elaborate my thesis along the line of their basic difference. Hubmaier was the theologian, Hutter the charismatic leader. Hubmaier wrote tracts against infant baptism, but no church developed from his activities. Hutter, on the contrary, wrote but ten epistles, yet he gave a new order and a new discipline to the brotherhood which enabled it to survive so many centuries. Here then we may recognize the core of our problem: it is the *idea of order,* pushing the idea of a theological system or a theological church altogether in the background. By this new idea of "order" Anabaptism distinguishes itself definitely from general Protestantism. Order, to be sure, exists also in Catholic monasticism, though connected with the idea of "merit" which is totally absent in the Anabaptist vision of "discipleship." Such a discipleship is not holiness (as pietists have misunderstood it) but a life of order within a brotherhood or *Gemeinde.* In this framework of order the concept of sin loses its preponderance; there is a great commission for the Anabaptist which he must not shirk in any case. Order then makes explicit what Christ meant by the "narrow path." No Anabaptist claims saintliness, but all have tried earnestly to walk this dangerous way.

Allow me to enumerate in greatest brevity a few salient points of this principle of "order" to make it more explicit and alive. Basic to it is the idea of obedience to God's Word. We are very fortunate to have a short tract on this subject from the very earliest period

[14] Franz Heimann, *Die Lehre von der Kirche und Gemeinschaft in der Huterischen Täufergemeinde,* Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Vienna, Austria, 1927 (mss. copy in the Goshen College Library). Heimann discusses primarily the relationship of Hutterite thought to Hubmaier's teaching, finding very little influence by the latter.

(about 1530) which sheds clear light on this all-important point.[15] The unknown author distinguishes sharply between "filial obedience" and "servile obedience." The first comes out of love to the Father and presupposes absolute Christian freedom of "response," while the other (usually thought of when obedience is mentioned) means a conformity to the letter of the law without love, hence legalism. Such an obedience would not elevate its performers from the snares of sin. Law might be good as a preparation but the final achievement of redemption comes through free response or filial obedience only.[16]

The second point deals with the difficult concept of *Gelassenheit* so much enjoined and stressed in Anabaptist tracts. It implies quite a variety of meanings, the best of which is perhaps that of "yieldedness," signifying an inner surrender and conquest of one's self.[17] *Wir müssen in Christus still halten* is a phrase which is met time and again in Anabaptist tracts. It does not mean resignation and quietism (so well known from mystical tracts) but is part and parcel of Anabaptist activity. *Gelassenheit* is the first step to true brotherhood, namely the overcoming of selfishness. With the Hutterites it receives even an economic interpretation, the giving up of private possession and of *Eigennutz* (self-interest). Thus understood *Gelassenheit* leads to a community of love, or even to living in absolute community of goods. Yet it should be made clear that *Gelassenheit,* yieldedness, alone is not a sufficient principle since it might easily deteriorate into a passive virtue, a mood of suffering for its own sake, while Christian obedience means something active and even creative. It seems that we find here a point of difference between several groups of sixteenth century Anabaptists. The brethren who in 1535-40 sang the oldest hymns of the *Ausbund* in the dungeon of the castle of Passau, were more of the passive mood of suffering,[18] while Jakob Hutter, writing in the same year his famous

[15] "Two Kinds of Obedience: an Anabaptist Tract on Christian Freedom," translated and edited by John C. Wenger, *M.Q.R.,* XXI (1947), 18-22.

[16] Compare also the related discussion of obedience by R. Friedmann, "Reason and Obedience, an Old Anabaptist Letter of Peter Walpot (1571) and Its Meaning," *M.Q.R.* XIX (1945), 27-40.

[17] Here is a fairly complete list of possible renderings of this term (originating in German mysticism): Resignation, calmness of mind, composure, staidness, conquest of selfishness, long-sufferingness, collectedness, silence of the soul, tranquillity, inner surrender, acquiescence, submission to God, yieldedness, *ataraxia,* unresponsiveness, equanimity, imperturbability, unconcern, detachment.

[18] Compare the related discussion by R. Friedmann, "Concerning the True Soldier of Christ, a Hitherto Unknown Tract of the Philippite Brethren in Moravia," *M.Q.R.,* V (1931), 87-89. Those singers in Passau were primarily Philippite brethren, and it seems that they stressed *Gelassenheit* more than anything else. This is also the claim of Rudolf Wolkan, *Die Lieder der Wiedertäufer,* Berlin, 1903, who analyzed the trial records of these brethren.

epistle to the governor of Moravia, represents rather the active, working type of Anabaptist obedience.

Next we must speak of brotherhood as the social expression of this new vision and this new order, again a basic principle in Anabaptist thought still recognized too little in its "theological" implication. *There is no way to God without the brother.* "How can you love God whom you do not see if you do not love your brother whom you see?" Practical love and discipline belong equally to such a fellowship. The *Ban,* too, is part of this order or, as we could better say now, of these ordinances. Within a living brotherhood the ban is a necessary element if responsibly handled; it can be established, however, only by leaders with charismatic authority.

Order and discipline within the brotherhood has nothing to do with "legalism" (so much dreaded by Lutherans) but is accepted with complete freedom as the consequence of previous inner experience. "Spiritual man who has renounced sin enjoys the law of God" *(hat Lust am Gesetze Gottes).*[19] The greatest danger and temptation implied in this idea of order is "formalism" (observable, for instance, among the Amish of today), a type of witnessing which perpetuates itself without the living spirit. On the other hand the danger is no less for all too spiritualistic groups that they become formless, emotionalized, and finally lose all testimonial vigor. Order, as the Anabaptists understood it in their best time, means definitely something spiritual, I would say the witnessing of the spirit through disciplined life. Perhaps it is here that we find the intrinsic difference between continental Anabaptism on the one side, and Anglo-Saxon Quakerism on the other side in which the free movement of the spirit is paramount.

This is, briefly demarked, the Anabaptist position. It is possible only on the basis of a certain simplicity of mind *(Einfalt des Geistes),* again a most controversial term. Intellectuals have trouble in grasping it. (And theologians are, in most cases, intellectuals.) A Mennonite minister about 1833 wrote a remarkable tract just on this point of distinction between "reason and understanding" *(Vernunft und Verstand),*[20] to him basic for an appreciation of the Mennonite way. There is an understanding of divine truth which surpasses all reason and appears as a great simplicity (i.e., absence of sophistication). "Go and do—with God's grace you will be able to do it." Paul's injunction, "bring into captivity every thought to the

[19] Lydia Müller, *loc. cit.,* p. 232 (*Ulrich Stadler's Sendbrief* of the year 1536).

[20] R. Friedmann, "Faith and Reason, the Principles of Mennonitism Reconsidered in a Tract of 1833," *M.Q.R.* XXII (1948), 75ff. The author of the tract is Heinrich Balzer of the Kleine Gemeinde in the Molotschna, Russian Ukraine.

obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:5) is quoted more than once in Anabaptist writings. The brethren were not too familiar with the *Anfechtungen* (doubts) of a Luther,[21] and even less familiar with the "pale caste of thought" of a Hamlet, so well known among theological scholars. Once an Anabaptist had taken the decisive step of accepting baptism upon faith, his way was clearly indicated, and his testimonies show a remarkable assurance of being on the right way.

So, and so alone, a "restitution" of the primitive Christian church was thought possible, after so many centuries of deviation and rationalization. That suffering (the "Cross") would not fail to come was quite clear to the brethren, and was accepted with *Gelassenheit*. It has been called their "theology of martyrdom"[22] though it is not a theology, strictly speaking.

Allow me then, in conclusion, briefly to summarize my main points. Beyond the fundamental articles of faith Anabaptism has no explicit theology, mainly because it is an existential and not a theological Christianity, where witnessing comes before arguing. Anabaptists have a *church of order* and not so much a *church of doctrines*. They understood their order as a restitution of the eternal order of God's kingdom—as far as this is possible for frail human beings. The presupposition to this is the earnest attempt at forsaking sin and keeping the great covenant of baptism. They knew very well that no man is without sin, hence everyone is in need of Christ's atonement for the human race. But they were at least striving after self-discipline and overcoming their natural frailness by the means of "order." To them it was beyond doubt that no final salvation is attainable without a condition of the mind where the brother, the neighbor, matters, and where love becomes a central concern.

This was a dynamic faith, a Christian revolution, so to speak, where the good tidings of salvation did not issue in intellectual rationalizations nor stop with pious enjoyment (Pietism). It meant rather a real change of life in which the "fear of God" replaced the bliss of salvation. "Ye are the salt of the earth. But if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?" That is the question put by the Anabaptists. Can we still say that Anabaptism falls within the compass of historical Protestantism?

21 Discussed by Roland H. Bainton, "Luther's Struggle for Faith," *Church History*, XVII (1948), 193-206, a most excellent essay on *Anfechtung* and its effects.

22 Ethelbert Stauffer, "The Anabaptist Theology of Martyrdom," *M.Q.R.*, XIX (1945), 179-214, a translation of "Märtyrertheologie and Täuferbewegung," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, XV (1933).

THE ANABAPTIST THEOLOGY OF DISCIPLESHIP

HAROLD S. BENDER

It is perhaps unwise and even futile to attempt to find the central controlling idea of Anabaptist theology, particularly in view of the general absence of speculative and systematizing thought among Anabaptist writers, but I, with no doubt others among our guild of Mennonite theologians and historians, am as yet unwilling to abandon the attempt. The paper which I now submit for your consideration represents a continuance of the search for the answer to this question.

In my first endeavor to distill the essence of Anabaptist theology, the results of which are recorded in *The Anabaptist Vision,* written in 1944, I proposed three basic elements in the Anabaptist vision, a new concept of the church as a brotherhood of committed believers, a new concept of the essence of Christianity as discipleship, and a new ethic of love. So far as I am aware, no criticism of this analysis has been offered thus far, except that by Prof. Don Smucker in his *M.Q.R.* article entitled, "Anabaptist Historiography in the Scholarship of Today." Smucker there criticized me for having omitted the great Anabaptist emphasis on the authority of the Scripture. I agree that this important concept in Anabaptist theology should have been included in some form. My defense for omitting it from the Anabaptist Vision, would be, (1) that it is a formal concept, and (2) that it is not distinctive of Anabaptism. Not only did all the reformers hold to "sola scriptura," but all historic evangelical Protestantism has ever since held to it. The uniqueness of Anabaptism lies not in its loyalty to Scripture as the sole and sufficient source and authority for faith and life, but in its attitude to the content of Scripture. True, Anabaptism was not fully conformant to Reformation Protestantism, in that it refused to place the Old Testament on a parity with the New Testament, choosing rather to make the new covenant of Christ supreme and relegating therefore the Old Testament to the position of a preparatory instrument in God's program. This important basic attitude toward the two testaments has significant theological consequences, with its bearing on the concept of the church (e.g., the church is not composed of entire families, or peoples as in the case of God's people in the O.T., but regenerated individuals, and baptism is not the counterpart of circumcision therefore), as well as on ethical questions such as the state and nonresistance. The thorough study of the Anabaptist attitude

toward Scripture which we greatly need has not yet been done. It would be particularly helpful in our time, when under the influence of general orthodox Protestant thought, as well as modern Fundamentalism, some among us are inclined to give the Old Testament too high a place, with undesirable consequences in the field of ethics (nonresistance) as well as in important points in the doctrine of the church and in eschatology. But the Anabaptist doctrine of Scripture does not seem to me to give us the answer to the question we are asking regarding the central regulative idea or ideas of Anabaptism, important as it is to understand fully and correctly this idea.

For a time I thought, with others, who perhaps still think so, that the central controlling idea of Anabaptism was the concept of the church. It seemed so clear that the Swiss Brethren and the Dutch "Menists," beginning with Conrad Grebel and Menno Simons, made their great goal the establishment of the true church. This was the primary challenge of Grebel, Manz, and Stumpf to Zwingli in those days in 1523 and 1524, and 1525, when the whole course of the Swiss Reformation was being decided. "Establish the true church according to the Apostles and we will go with you and we shall have success," was the great call of the first Anabaptists, not only to Zwingli, but to all the Reformers of their day; and when the answer came back, "No, we cannot risk the separated, committed believers' and disciples' church but must continue the mass institutional church," the break was inevitable.

The vision of the true church which had come so often before to earnest Christians down through the centuries after the fall of Christianity under Constantine, could not be surrendered; this time, in the great new day, it would be realized. And from that day to this it has been increasingly realized (more in form than in essence, I admit), in the great free church movement of Anglo-Saxon-American Christendom. Certainly this is a major powerful concept, and this vision of this true church of Christ has been the gleam which we Mennonites have always followed, and which in its perversive form of narrow legalistic sect-building has been perhaps the greatest tragedy and destructive factor in our history. Yet, with all its power and historic significance it seems to me not to be the ultimate idea. In a sense, is not the concept of the church also a formal concept? The character of the church is determined by something beyond the church itself, for it ultimately derives from the concept of the nature of the Christian experience and the Christian life. The concept of the church is actually a derivative idea. We have not yet arrived at

the heart when we stop with the church, even though the Anabaptist concept of the church is certainly one of the most distinctive features of Anabaptist theology.

There are some who would have us believe in the third place, that the concept of love, or in its narrower applied form, nonresistance, is the central idea of Anabaptism. Now all Christians believe in love, hence this could be a distinctive concept for Anabaptism only if it is a particular type of love, or applied in some unique way, or directed toward some unique object. This is not the case in Anabaptism. Much as I believe in the importance of the ethic of love in the Anabaptist vision, I must dissent from those who would make it the regulative concept of our faith. Nonresistance does flow from the concept of love as the Anabaptist sees it, but not so in the understanding of other Protestants nor of Catholics. Nonresistance arises rather, either from the basic rejection of force and violence, or the concept of the sacredness of human life, or the plain command of Christ. In the last analysis the meaning of love for the Anabaptist flows from the understanding of the nature and example of Jesus.

Does it not seem that every time we have sought the essence of Anabaptism in one of the other major ideas, such as the Scripture, the church, or the principle of love, we are driven a step further into the ultimate relationship of the individual Christian to Christ? I would therefore propose that we pursue our search further down this road, for I believe that if we do so we shall find the answer in the concept of discipleship as the most characteristic, most central, most essential and regulative concept in Anabaptist thought, which largely determines all else. We shall also find at this point the parting of the ways between various forms of Christianity, and various types of theology and ethics.

What think ye of Christ? The limits of this paper will not admit of a comprehensive review of all the answers which have been given in Christian history and theology to this question. May I briefly sketch the major types of answer and then proceed to delineate the major features of the Anabaptist theology of discipleship.

First, there are those who think of Christ primarily as a prophet or moral teacher, one who brings intellectual truth out of which to build a system of thought, theological or ethical, with answers to the meaning of life or existence. For such Christ remains primarily an object of thought and reflection, about whom one intellectualizes. It goes with a certain attitude toward life in which all too often speculation, whether philosophical or theological, becomes the tech-

nique by which life is mastered. The actual processes of life are carried on often quite apart from the ideal of truth which Christ brings, and intellectualization or rationalization is used to close the gap or to conceal the disparity between the comprehended ideal of Christ and the disobedient practice of the actual life. This is the peculiar danger of classic Protestant theology, particularly of Calvinism.

Another answer is to think of Christ primarily as a being to be worshiped. The most orthodox theology of His person as a member of the Trinity, is combined with a high liturgy of praise and symbolic representations in sacrament, in art, and in literature, which call forth the ultimate in adoration. This type may eventuate in a Christ-mysticism, or in a refined theological dialectics, or in sensualized liturgy and routine formalism. In any case Christ remains remote from the actual daily practice of life. This is the peculiar danger of Catholicism, Greek and Roman.

A third answer to Christ is to think of Him and use Him exclusively as Saviour. Now in the true ultimate and comprehensive meaning of salvation this answer would lead us into the heart of the Anabaptist theology of discipleship. Actually it often stops far short of that, for Christ becomes only the sin-bearer, who by His atoning death on the cross delivers from the guilt of sin, and by forgiveness and justification reconciles the sinner to God and brings peace. This marvelous and wholly necessary experience of the forgiving and cleansing grace of God in Christ, both for the past sinful life and for the inevitable sins of believers, is intended in God's plan of salvation to be only the initial step in Christian experience as well as the constant carrying foundation for the daily life, not the whole of the Christian experience nor even its end goal. But the joy and blessing of this experience with the access it brings to God and the blessedness of the fellowship with Christ is so great, that all too often it becomes the essence and the whole of the Christian experience, beside which other things become relatively unimportant. Justification by faith becomes so great and so wonderful, that sanctification of life and obedience to Christ, and transformation after His image, are in effect minimized and neglected. The Lordship of Christ is in effect set aside. This has been the peculiar danger of historic Lutheranism and remains the besetting temptation of modern Fundamentalism. Dispensationalism even goes so far as to relegate the Lordship, or let us say, the Kingship of Christ to a later age beyond the scope and ken of our present Christian practice.

Then there is the final answer to Christ which takes Him as everything, Prophet, Saviour, *and Lord,* and makes the believer His disciple. This answer basically believes that Christ is to be translated in the life-expression of the disciple, or in the words of the Apostle Paul, Christ is to be "formed" in him, and He is to be Lord of all his life. This is the Anabaptist answer to Christ, and out of the understanding of the meaning of this answer derive all the major ideas of Anabaptism. (It has been also in some sense the answer of other movements in the history of the church, including even Methodism and Pietism in its best form.)

Now the idea of discipleship is not unique with Anabaptism, for it has appeared in various forms through the Christian centuries, sometimes in almost identical form with that which it took in Anabaptism. It was the vision of the earliest Christians of the New Testament age. One of its purest expressions was in Peter Chelchitzki of Bohemia (1390-1460) spiritual father of the Unitas Fratrum. But though the ideal of "following Christ," "die Nachfolge Christi," or of "imitating" Him, has been a recurring creative idea all through Christian history, it was the mission of the Anabaptists to give expression in a powerful way to this idea at a creative moment in history, at the beginning of our modern age in such a way that this time it did not die shortly but was incorporated in a continuing group, and through manifold ways fertilized modern Protestantism. The tragedy is that the very group that professed this vision and seriously attempted to practice it lost its witnessing zeal and ultimately no small amount of the reality of this vision in its own practice, so that the discipleship (which its theology still holds), became flabby and diluted or shriveled and lost much of its vitality, though still retaining much of the pristine character.

In essence the discipleship which the Anabaptists proclaimed was simply the bringing of the whole of life under the Lordship of Christ, and the transformation of this life, both personal and social, after His image. From this point of view they subjected not only the church but the whole social and cultural order to criticism, rejected what they found to be contrary to Christ, and attempted to put into actual practice His teachings as they understood them both ethically and sociologically.

Now anyone who undertakes such a critical examination of his own world, must disengage himself from the contemporary culture in which he is immersed in order to clearly discern the discrepancies between this culture and the Christ whom he wishes to express.

Fortunately, the Anabaptists succeeded in doing this to a considerable extent, though in varying degree. They did not always succeed so well in the creative application of Christ to their situation, since they were early deprived of many of their better trained and more capable leaders with the necessary equipment of mind and heart, as well as experience plus courage, to undertake this tremendous task.

The Anabaptist theology of discipleship can be better and more fully understood perhaps by comparing it with two closely related types of conception and practice in the matter of following Christ; the first of these is the type of *Nachfolge Christi* so powerfully and so beautifully set forth by Thomas à Kempis about a century earlier in the book which next to the Bible itself has reputedly had a greater circulation and influence than any other book, *The Imitation of Christ.* For all its effectiveness in urging upon the Christian disciple the imitation of the character of his master by the conquest of the human passions and the vices to which they lead, and the production of the virtues of Christ, this book is concerned primarily with the inner world of the soul, where the believer is to cultivate the garden of his spiritual life with his eye constantly upon his ultimate personal goal, heaven. Self-renunciation and resignation are among the highest virtues. The reader is taught that only through suffering, by carrying his cross with him every day in imitation of Christ, can he reach the heavenly country. The goal of the disciple is purification of himself so that he can truly love God and Christ, and then also his neighbor. He is advised to avoid society as much as possible, to devote much time to contemplation, to read the "sacred writings" with one's mind freed from temporal cares, and with devotion. Basically this is mysticism mixed with asceticism. The social dimension is almost completely lacking, and criticism of the total social and cultural order with a view to the establishment of a full Christian order in the brotherhood and church of the living Christ in the midst of the present world is missing. This type of "following" Christ does not meet the fullness and richness of the New Testament concept, and is not at all the Anabaptist idea. Thomas à Kempis and all those many who follow in his train evade the conflict with the world, avoid the constructive labor of establishing the true church, and thus escape the real cross-bearing experience of true discipleship. There is more kinship between Thomas and the later Pietists than the Anabaptists.

Another type of discipleship comes still closer to the Anabaptists; it is that of the so-called Spiritualists of the Reformation,

including Schwenkfeld and possibly even Hans Denk. These men caught the vision of full discipleship but decided to delay the practice of it until a more convenient season. At least this was the case with Schwenkfeld. He was very close to the Anabaptists but advised his followers to refrain from openly organizing a church, evidently because of the opposition and danger of persecution. Hans Denk at the end of his life regretted that he had baptized and would have merely preached the new faith without implementing it in an organization had he lived. Even Melchior Hofmann, when the going got hot, called for an armistice of two years with no baptizing. All these men shrank from the ultimate price of open discipleship in the crucial moment.

Now it is of the essence of discipleship in the Anabaptist concept that one openly take his stand for his Lord regardless of consequences. There was to be no crypto-discipleship. Did not Jesus Himself say, "If you are ashamed of me, I shall be ashamed of you in that day"? What the Anabaptist accepted as truth that he put into practice in life forthwith. He came to grips directly with the world which is an enemy to God. It is this quality of what we moderns call "existentialism" which was deeply characteristic of the Anabaptist theology of discipleship, the inseparability of belief and practice, faith and life. To profess the new birth meant a new life. To take the name of Christ meant to take His spirit and His nature. To promise obedience to Him meant actually to live out and carry through His principles and do His works. To claim the cleansing and redemption from sin which baptism symbolized, meant to leave off the sins and lusts of the flesh and the spirit and to live a holy life. To take up the cross daily meant to go out into conflict with the world of sin and evil and fight the good fight of faith, taking gladly the blows and buffetings of the world. To be a disciple meant to teach and to observe all things whatsoever the Master had taught and commanded.

This absolute discipleship applied to all areas of life. It meant a church composed only of disciples, not a mixture of disciples and worldlings. It meant that brethren in need should share their material goods. It meant a Christianizing of all social relationships, a substituting of the simplicity and sincerity of Christ for the pride and vanity of the world. It meant rejection of violence and bloodshed and warfare. It meant far more than the Brethren of that day realized or were able to work out in theoretical programs and statements. But it was even so with the Master and His earliest disciples,

the apostles, who proclaimed and exemplified great principles of life without developing systematic and programmatic formulæ for their application. Slavery, for instance, was not specifically condemned and forbidden by either Jesus or Paul, nor even warfare as such; but the life and love which they brought and taught inevitably mean the elimination of slavery and warfare. Implicit in the basic Anabaptist theology of discipleship was a new order which was bound to come as the discipleship was practiced.

I am aware that the thesis which I have proposed of the centrality and regulative character of the Anabaptist concept of discipleship requires the fullest possible documentation if it is to be accepted, and I hope to deliver this documentation in time. It is not available for this presentation today. However, all of us recall such striking phrases as that of Hans Denk, "Niemand vermag Christum wahrlich zu erkennen, es sei denn, dass er ihm nachfolge im Leben," and the complaints of the Swiss Brethren and Menno Simons that the preaching of the preachers of the state churches failed to produce "fruit," that faith to be living must be "in evidence," etc. So I rest my case at this point with its simple assertion, and commend it to you for the most careful scrutiny and entreat analysis. I hold it to be the true Christian way, the Gospel.

THE ANABAPTIST DOCTRINE OF THE RESTITUTION OF THE TRUE CHURCH

Franklin H. Littell

For several generations friends of the sixteenth century "evangelical Täufer" have attempted to define the constitutive element, the unique contribution made by the movement. What did the Anabaptists add to the stream of Christian life and history without which the faith would today be impoverished and weak? In the judgment of this writer, the fundamental contribution was in *the view of the church.* This judgment, gaining increasing acceptance among Free Church historians, has been independently stated also by various modern scholars who still feel impelled to defend the theologically oriented attack of Luther and other state-church reformers on the movement. Thus Fritz Heyer, who has done the most thorough job of those committed to Lutheran apologetics, comes to the conclusion:

> "Das Bewusstsein der kleinen Gemeinschaften, im Gegensatz zur 'vermeinten Christenheit' die rechte Kirche zu sein, verdichtet sich gegenüber der Kirche der Reformation."[1]

The Anabaptists were the main forerunners of "sectarian Protestantism," and their views on religious liberty are today common currency among free church groups. Although it is not commonly acknowledged, even in America, the coming triumph of Free Church Christianity makes a study of the Anabaptist church view as important sociologically as knowledge of the reformers is traditionally assumed to be important theologically.

The Anabaptist view of the church began with a vision of the early church. Christian life and faith during the heroic age were contrasted with the corrupt institutions and sophisticated dogmatics which marked the great church following its capture by Constantine the Great. The state-church reformers were judged "half-way men," because they did not really free the church from her ancient bondage. The Anabaptists conceived of their historical significance as a restitution of the true church, a recovery of the discipline and mobility which characterized the Christian people before the church went a-whoring from her Lord. The Anabaptist teachings were born of the New Testament and delivered amidst persecution and

[1] Heyer, Fritz, *Der Kirchenbegriff der Schwärmer* (Leipzig 1939). *Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte,* No. 166, p. 12.

inward travail. The *Spiritualisten* (especially Sebastian Franck and Caspar Schwenckfeld) shared their vision of the early church but lacked the historical sense to see what held it together besides inspiration; they did not produce a coherent church view. Neither did they leave congregations in the continuing life of the Universal Church. But the *Taüfer,* with their abiding faith and ethical concern, brought into being voluntary religious associations which pioneered along several significant lines for the churches of today where church and state are separated. What were their teachings?

Believers' Baptism (Erwachsenentaufe, Spättaufe)

Infant baptism was challenged by most Anabaptist groups on scriptural grounds, and it came early into the discussion at such various points as Wittenberg, Zürich, Strassburg, Münster, and among the Hutterites and the Dutch. The Anabaptists were convinced that the practice was introduced after Apostolic times, in spite of the classic rejoinder that the baptism of households must have included children. I Cor. 10:2. The first of the Seven Articles of Schlatten am Randen (Feb. 24, 1527) condemned the practice as non-apostolic.[2] It would not be used, therefore, in a congregation seriously trying to relive the life of the early church.

> A great mass of men is without God's Word and command in today's world with its Infant Baptism—a trickery to the simple and an insidious shame to all Christianity, a brassy pretence of all the godless; for in all the Bible not a single quotation can be brought forward to justify it.[3]

The Great Church said it was necessary to baptize children lest they die in sin; but if children were in mortal sin in their natural state Christ would not have said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: *for of such is the kingdom of God.*" (Luke 18:16)[4] They are restored by His sacrifice from the depths of original sin, and remain so until able to distinguish between good

[2] Beck, Josef, *Die Geschichts-Bücher der Wiedertäufer in Oesterreich-Ungarn* (Wien, 1883). *Fontes Rerum Austriacarum,* 43:2, pp. 41-44. Hereafter, *Beck.*

[3] Hut, Hans, "Vom geheimnus der tauf, baide des zaichens und des wesens, ein anfang eines rechten warhaftigen Christlichen lebens"; Joan: 52, in Müller, Lydia, *ed., Glaubenszeugnisse oberdeutscher Taufgesinnter* (Leipzig, 1938). *Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte,* No. XX:1. p. 27. Hereafter, *WtQ,* 1938.

[4] This was a favorite Anabaptist argument: Schlaffer, Hans, "Kurtze und ainfältige vermanung vom kindertauf, wie derselbig nit mag beibracht werden auss heiliger schift" (1528), in *WtQ* 1938, p. 100; Stadler, Ulrich, "Etlich schöne trostliche sendbrief, underrichtungen und leeren . . . . Von der erbsünd, tauf, urtl der sünd zum tod, gemainschaft und andern nutzlichen sachen," *Ibid.,* p. 233; reported in the Disputation at Lütisberg (1533), in Egli, Emil, *Die St. Galler Taufer* (Zurich, 1887), footnote 5, p. 54; testimony of the Grüninger *Taufer* (June 4f, 1527), No. 1201 in Egli, Emil, *Actensammlung zur Geschichte der Zürcher Reformation in den Jahren 1519-1533* (Zürich, 1879), 2 vols. II, 547. Hereafter, *Egli.*

and evil.[5] When Menno Simons questioned the practice and turned toward the apologists they could not allay his doubts. Luther justified it by the child's appropriation of faith from the congregation; Butzer called it a guarantee of godly training; Bullinger, following Zwingli, said it was the Christian parallel to the Old Testament ordinance of circumcision; no one spoke from the New Testament.

By the very example of the Master, baptism is an adult matter. At the age of 30 He went into the Jordan to observe the approved custom at the hands of John; thereby He became a sign of the New Covenant.[6] Those who would walk in His way of submission and martyrdom might thereby know that the Christian life requires mature dedication and discipline. Such commitment requires a degree of understanding *(Vernunft)* which only mature persons can possess.[7] The commitment begins in a thorough-going repentance; repentance was the key word in the oldest baptismal liturgies.[8] The new member must be deeply aware that he has forsworn the world, sin, and the devil, and in whole heart and soul and body live for God and His Church.[9]

Baptism is a symbol of sinking in the death of Christ, being raised to a new birth in His resurrection.[10] No one can come into the kingdom unless he be born again (John 3:3), and this was the spiritual event symbolized by water baptism into the community.

"Marx, you have been before now a light-hearted young fellow, and must become another man, to put the Old Adam from you and take on a newer and better self." Marx answered, he would do his best. Then Blaurock asked if he longed for the Grace of God and when he answered yes Blaurock spoke: "Come here, and I will baptize you." Then Marx went and at that Blaurock baptized him.[11]

The new birth has Christ alone as foundation, and occurs radically in the history of both the individual believer and the True Church; it is this constitutive element which distinguished the Anabaptists from both Roman Catholic work-righteousness and Luther-

[5] Testimony in Bossert, Gustav, *ed., Quellen zur Geschichte der Wiedertäufer: Herzogtum Württemberg* (Leipzig, 1930). *Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte,* No. XIII:1. p. 240. Hereafter, *WtQ* 1930.

[6] Zieglschmid, A. J. F., ed., *Die älteste Chronik der Hutterischen Brüder* (Philadelphia, 1943), p. 27. Hereafter, *Z.*

[7] Testimony No. 45 (Sept. 22, 1527), in Schornbaum, Karl, *ed., Quellen zur Geschichte der Wiedertäufer: Markgraftum Brandenburg* (Leipzig, 1934). *Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte,* No. XVI:2. p. 38. Hereafter, *WtQ,* 1934.

[8] The oldest was by Hubmaier, and a second came thirteen years later from the hand of Peter Riedemann; Heyer, Fritz, *op. cit.,* p. 9.

[9] Müller, Lydia, *Der Kommunismus der mährischen Wiedertäufer* (Leipzig, 1927), *SVRG,* No. 45:1. p. 37.

[10] Hut, Hans, "Vom geheimnus der tauf . . . ." in *WtQ* 1938, p. 21.

[11] Testimony (Feb. 7, 1525). No. 636 in *Egli,* I, 284.

an *sola fides*. It is the ground of their uncompromising integrity in working out a Christian witness.[12] "Therefore the baptism is a battle with sin, to kill it throughout the whole of life."[13]

The real issue was the restitution of a vigorous congregational life, as it had been lived in apostolic times, and the argument between infant and adult baptism was a vehicle of the prior issue.[14] The preaching of the Gospel, often carried on the Great Commission,[15] was an open invitation to any man to make personal absolution and covenant with God and the community. The idea of a covenantal relation to God and one's fellows is the foundation of the "Anabaptist" community, and through it comes the use of the Ban (spiritual government).[16] True baptism is that submission to the Divine described in I Peter 3:18-22, the response of a good conscience toward God.[17] This cannot be easily done, but requires brotherly admonition and exhortation, the practice of intentional fellowship. By baptism the believer comes under the discipline of a Biblical people, and if the door of entrance is closely watched a strong and true church can be maintained. The Master worked long with a small group, and then one of them betrayed Him. A long time of training was required for membership in the early church, and the True Church in Restitution would not add members promiscuously.[18] The covenant was undertaken at baptism and is the highest expression of religious voluntarism short of martyrdom; the balancing authority is the power of the community to forgive sins.[19] This was the Key of David *(Schlüssel Davits)*, which in the inchoate Ana-

[12] Correll, Ernst, *Das Schweizerische Täufermennonitentum* (Tübingen, 1925), p. 23.

[13] Hut, Hans, "Vom geheimnus der tauf . . . ." in *WtQ* 1938, p. 25.

[14] Loserth, Johann, *Doctor Balthasar Hubmaier und die Anfänge der Wiedertaufe in Mähren* (Brünn, 1893), p. 2.

[15] Only an adult might qualify under the Great Commission. See article by this writer, "The Anabaptist Theology of Missions," M.Q.R. XXI (Jan., 1947) 1:5-17.

[16] Bergfried, Ulrich, *Verantwortung als Theologisches Problem im Täufertum des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Wuppertal-Elberfeld, 1938), p. 98. It has been wrongly asserted that the Anabaptists were "Confessionless" groups. This is only true in the sense that ethical rather than doctrinal issues generally concerned them, and they used the ban for moral government but rarely to enforce intellectual conformity. Schwenckfeld and Franck are the true points of departure for Confessionless Christianity. Heyer, Fritz, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

[17] "Ein Ausschnitt aus Peter Walpots 'Kinderlehre,'" printed in *WtQ* 1938, p. 257; also Riedemann, Peter, *Rechenschaft unserer Religion, Lehr und Glaubens, von den Brüdern, so man die Hutterischen nennt, ausgangen . . . . 1565* (Ashton Keynes, Wilts., Eng., 1938), pp. 79f.

[18] A Hutterian observer condemned the Nikolsburg congregational life because Hubmaier baptized large numbers into the church every Sunday who certainly did not know the full meaning of their commitment; nor were they subject to any system of congregational government. Testimony at Erlangen (Jan. 17, 1529), No. 145; printed in *WtQ* 1934, p. 132.

[19] Müller, Lydia, *op. cit.*, 42-43.

baptist circles had resided in the primary religious experience of the individual; *in the quest for final authority the Key of David and the Keys of Peter became identical.*[20] Group-consciousness became a dominant force in baptized life. Among the rules for the Hutterian community (1529) was this: the internal admonitions exercised under the authority of the baptismal submission were not to be revealed outside the church.[21] For all practical purposes, the power of the esoteric group was final in spiritual matters[22]; neither the unbaptized selfishness of the Old Adam nor an outside social control might invade the spiritual dominion thus mapped out.

Spiritual Government (Bann, Ehemeidung, Hirten)

Spiritual government rests, in the end, upon the threat of expulsion from the congregation of believers: the Ban. In some cases this may have meant social ostracism, but generally it meant the loss of privileges within the brotherhood. There is no compulsion in a voluntary association but this breaking of fellowship.

> And if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican. (Matt. 18:15-17 R.V.).

This New Testament ordinance is the beginning of every Anabaptist elaboration of the problem of government within the church,[23] and it is obvious that it presupposes a freely acting congregation who do not depend upon any worldly power, but upon their own spirit of fellowship.[24] The secular government is quite outside the discussion.

The most famous Anabaptist confessions concerned themselves very largely with the matter of spiritual government. The second of the Seven Articles (Feb. 24, 1527)[25] deals with this agreed practice

[20] "Rechenschaft und bekanntnus des glaubens . . . ." (Trieste, 1539), in *WtQ*, 1938, p. 204; "Ein Rechenschaft von unsern lieben brüdern Jeronime, Michel und Hänsel . . . ." (1536), *ibid.*, p. 209.

[21] *Z.*, pp. 83f

[22] *WtQ* 1938, p. xvii.

[23] Riedemann, Peter, *op. cit.*, p. 141: "Rechenschaft und bekanntnus. . . ." (Trieste, 1539) *WtQ* 1938, p. 197.

[24] Article by Neff, "Bann," in Hege, Christian, and Neff, Christian, *ed., Mennonitisches Lexikon* (Frankfurt/M and Weierhof (Pfalz), 1913, 1937, I, 115-19. Hereafter, *ML.* In their famous letter of Sept. 5, 1524, the Swiss Brethren asked Müntzer if he practiced genuine spiritual government founded upon Matt. 18. Cf. Rauschenbusch, Walter, "The Zurich Anabaptists and Thomas Müntzer," *The American Journal of Theology* IX (1905), 91-106.

[25] Beck, *op cit.*, pp. 41-44.

of the congregations and the fifth of the Five Articles of the Hutterians (c. 1547)[26] deals with a special application of spiritual government: divorce between believers and unbelievers. The majesty of the church parallels the power of the magistrate in the world, and church sovereignty rests upon membership loyalty.

After the people have received the Word of God and through water baptism in the presence of the church have put themselves under obligation to God to live according to the Word, and if they are ready to walk in newness of life and henceforth not to let sin reign in the mortal body, they still have need of medicine, because men are by nature children of wrath, evil and incapable, whereby the foul and stinking flesh together with the poisoned members may be somehow cut off, in order that the whole body may not be dishonored and corrupted. [27]

Balthasar Hubmaier elaborated the theme extensively in two works: *Von der brüderlichen Strafe* and *Vom christlichen Bann.* He went into some detail to describe the process:

Leonard—What is fraternal discipline?

John—When one sees his brother sin, he should go to him in love and admonish him fraternally and privately to leave off such sin. If he does leave off, his soul is won. If he does not, then two or three witnesses should be taken, and he may be admonished before them a second time. If he yields, it is well; if not, the church should hear it. He is brought before her and admonished the third time. If he leaves off his sin the church has won his soul.

Leonard—Where does the church get its authority?

John—From Christ's command, given in Matt. 18:18, John 20:23.

Leonard—By what right may one brother use his authority over another?

John—By the baptismal vow, which subjects every one to the church and all its members, according to the word of Christ.

Leonard—Suppose the admonished sinner will not correct his course?

John—Then the church has the power and right to exclude and excommunicate him, as a perjurer and apostate.

Leonard—What is excommunication?

John—It is exclusion and separation to such an extent that no fellowship is held with such a person by Christians, whether in speaking, eating, drinking, grinding, baking, or in any other way, but he is treated as a heathen and a publican, that is, as an offensive, disorderly and venomous man, who is bound and delivered over to Satan. He is to be avoided and shunned, lest the entire visible church be evil spoken of, disgraced and dishonored by his company, and corrupted by his example, instead of being startled and made afraid by his punishment, so that they will mortify their sins. For as truly as God lives what the Church admits or excludes on earth is admitted or excluded above.

[26] "Von der Eeschaidung zwischen glaubigen und unglaubigen," in *WtQ* 1938, pp. 253f. It is permissible, but not a commandment; p. 255. See discussion *infra.*

[27] Quotation from Hubmaier in Newman, A. H., Balthasar Hubmaier and the Moravian Anabaptists," *The Goshen College Record, Review Supplement* XXVII (September, 1926) 10: 4-22, 12.

Leonard—What are the grounds for exclusion?
John—Unwillingness to be reconciled with one's brother, or to abstain from sin . . . .[28]

Hubmaier was not, however, able to attain any high level of spiritual discipline in his Nikolsburg congregation, but there were those who carried through elsewhere and left spiritual progeny organized in disciplined congregations. These were the "Anabaptists," properly speaking.

The Ban was not, then, the final word. In the instruction of the Master the Anabaptists beheld a certain concept of what His church should be like—a community of saints.[29] The Great Church was apostate, for there was no moral earnestness exercised in it by the power of the Ban.[30] The True Church is a strong band of ethical discipline and integrity.

Thus saith the Lord: I have drawn you out of the world. Thus the world hates you. Thereby he shows plainly that there is a clear distinction between God's children and the children of the world.[31]

The True Church is separated from the evil and wicked; Israel must go out from Babylon and Egypt.[32] Said Huter: "Furthermore, we have sundered ourselves from worldly society and its loathsome life and have gone out from it."[33]

The Hutterians criticized the Swiss Brethren because they mixed with the world and made no Christian distinctions regarding war taxes, woodwork on images, and "close practices" in commerce.[34] In similar terms the Polish Brethren later criticized the Dutch Mennonites on their ethical life:

In which respect the Mennonites err not less than the others, who will not walk proudly themselves (and) yet make for others proud clothes, paint pictures, make vases and more of such things, which the world should not have for the lust and pomp of its life.[35]

28 Quotation from Hubmaier in Vedder, Henry C., Balthasar Hubmaier: The Leader of the Anabaptists, (New York & London, 1905) *Heroes of the Reformation,* No. VIII. pp. 212-14. Hubmaier was not "the leader of the Anabaptists," but his views had some influence in the early days of the movement.

29 Bergfried, Ulrich, *op. cit.,* p. 20.

30 Testimony at Kirchheim (March 24, 1566), No. 120 in *WtQ* 1930, p. 1084.

31 Testimony of Wolfgang Wüst of Beiersdorf (Jan. 3, 1528), Nos. 78 & 79 in *WtQ* 1934, p. 71.

32 Fourth article in the Seven Articles (Feb. 24, 1527), in Beck, pp. 41-44; also, article by Hege, "Absonderung," in *ML* I (1913) 11-12.

33 Hutter, Jakob, "Anschleg und fürwenden der blinden und verkerten welt, und aller gottlosen gegen den fromen," *WtQ* 1938, p. 170.

34 *Z,* p. 357.

35 A late criticism, quoted in Wotschke, Theodor, *Geschichte der Reformation in Polen* (Leipzig 1911), volume I of *Studien zur Kultur und Geschichte der Reformation,* p. 225.

Concern for a vigorous internal ethic was of paramount importance, a quality of life to do honor to God and the high calling in which they were set apart. As free associations they felt themselves on Biblical ground in expecting all who stayed in good standing to concern themselves for the good name they bore in common and for each other. Within the pattern of authority of which the Ban was the outer limit there was a whole fabric of common concern and mutual aid.

During the decades of savage persecution the Anabaptists lost all rights before the law. Even under the rule of Philip of Hesse, more mild than most Protestant statesmen, those called "Anabaptists" were treated as Jews before the law and forbidden to hold land.[36] This gave rise to special problems in property holding and within the family. Their goods were commonly confiscated if there were no approved orthodox heirs, and holding to a "heresy" was sufficient ground for a spouse pleading divorce in the courts. This situation was countered by rules within the congregations and especially within the Hutterian communities; provisional approval was given for divorce from an unbelieving partner.[37] Christ brought not peace but a sword. And in all congregations counsel was given against marrying out into "the world."[38]

> Thus the church of the *Schwärmer* took release from all bonds in order to separate itself from the godless. For the people of God would be spotted by relations with the godless.[39]

Only the Swiss Brethren attempted a moderate policy based on Paul's advice for the winning of a non-Christian spouse to Christ. What should be done in the case of a partner who refused to come into exile for the faith? In the Hutterian brotherhood the most strict policy was evolved, for family life was most organically related to the spiritual power of the congregation. In any thoroughgoing communism the family affords a problem of special significance, and the Hutterites rigorously established the authority of the *Gemeinschaft*.

The place and function of the elder is also worthy of special discussion. The radicals were strong partisans of lay religion at the beginning, and did not view too favorably any professional workers

[36] Hege, Christian, "The Early Anabaptists in Hesse," V *MQR* (1931) 157-78, 159.
[37] *Z*, pp. 250, 307.
[38] See article by Ernst Correll, "Ehe," in *ML* I (1913) 509-26.
[39] Heyer, Fritz, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

—certainly not those supported by rents and tithes.[40] In their oft-mentioned letter to Thomas Müntzer (Sept. 5, 1524), Grebel and his group made a point for voluntarism and asked him if he still accepted a salary (from the State). At first there were no paid clergy in the movement, nor were there regularly constituted governors of community life. Christ's office as High Priest (Heb. 10:14 and I Peter 2:9) was exclusive.

> XVIII. They have no rulers, one is like the other, all equal in the service of one another.
>
> XX. When they are together it is their custom to speak of the Word of God and to admonish one another in a brotherly fashion."[41]

As has been seen in the case of Menno Simons this informal picture was altered during the struggle against religious individualism and prophetism, and in the effort to survive persecution. Like the early church the Anabaptists had their "Montanists"; and they were hardly more successful than the early church in maintaining the principle of charismatic leadership within the movement, after excluding the spiritualizers. The conflict between Jakob Huter and Simon Schützinger was primarily this: whether "inspired" or "elected" leadership should prevail. It was the last victory for the former type among the Hutterian Brethren.[42] Other wings of the movement had to deal with prophetic leaders and groups at times, but the leadership chosen by the community customarily prevailed.

Peter Riedemann wrote back from prison that they should honor one another and especially the "dienner" (1540).[43] These leaders were laymen, chosen by the congregation on the authority of the New Testament example of Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5; I Tim. 3; 5:17; I Cor. 9:14.[44] And they were chosen on the basis of piety and dedication for the shepherding of the community—to read, to warn, to teach, to punish. There were various offices; among the Hutterites the most notable were the "Shepherds" *(Hirten)*, Missioners *(Diener des Worts)*, and Stewards *(Diener der Notdurft)*.

[40] On this particular aspect of the Brethren's radicalism, cf. Egli, Emil, *Die Züricher Wiedertäufer zur Reformationszeit* (Friedrich Schulthess, 1878), Zürich. p. 12; also Unruh, B. H., in Neff, Christian, *ed., Gedenkschrift zum 400 Jährigen Jubiläum der Mennoniten oder Taufgesinnten, 1525-1925* (Ludwigshafen am Rh., 1925). This was not a social attack so much as part of their broad-gauged warfare with the establishment.

[41] Testimony of Ambrosius Spitalmeier (c. Sept. 9, 1527), No. 31 in *WtQ* 1934, pp. 27, 28.

[42] *Z.* pp. 107f; also Heyer, Fritz, *op. cit.*, pp. 81f.

[43] *Z*, pp. 212f.

[44] Article by Neff, "Aelteste," in *ML* I (1913) 39-40; also Correll, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

The leaders were never supported by other than voluntary collections, and it was yet Menno Simons' proud boast that he had lived for years from brother to brother and had never gone hungry nor in want. There were some who claimed that a minister should support himself by hand-work as did Paul. Hofmann and Rinck and some other earlier leaders did so, but voluntary support was most commonly practiced. Despite variant practices it is evident that the Anabaptists as a whole shared certain prejudices rooted in the New Testament and opposed to a salaried hierarchy; the community of believers was to be sovereign in all cases.

Community (Gemeinschaft)

In 1529, disturbed by lack of spiritual discipline in the Nikolsburg churches and under pressure to take the oath, a little band of two hundred Swiss refugees followed Jakob Widemann out onto the land. There they laid all their belongings on a cloak, resolved to live the life of sharing depicted in *Acts* 2 and 4, and chose seven Stewards *(Diener der Notdurft)* on the authority of Acts 6:3-5.[45] It was the duty of a steward to enforce the rules of community, to see to it that all sought the common good and none betrayed it by self-interest. This was the unpropitious beginning of the "communism" of the Hutterian Brethren, an economy which persists to this day in North Dakota, Montana, Manitoba, Alberta, and in Paraguay. Under the brief but vigorous leadership of Jakob Huter,[46] in the years 1533-35, the communism of consumption thus introduced was made a coherent social system. During the early decades the Hutterites were blessed with a remarkable series of able leaders; besides Huter, we may mention Wolfgang Brandhuber, Peter Riedmann and Peter Walpot. Brandhuber built up a strong economy, teaching those skills and crafts by which they could avoid war and worldly commerce.[47] Riedmann perfected the emerging communism of production, and gave it a confessional grounding.[48] Peter Walpot headed the greatest missionary organization of that epoch, maintaining an extensive correspondence and guiding a large and effective corps of lay missioners, whose home base was a disciplined Christian community.[49]

[45] *Z.* p. 87. See article by Loserth, "Diener der Notdurft," in *ML* I (1913 440-42.

[46] On Jakob Huter, see article by Loserth in *ML* II (1937) 375-78. Also, in Horsch, John, *The Hutterian Brethren, 1528-1931.* (Mennonite Historical Society, Goshen, Ind., 1931; number 2 of *Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History.*)

[47] *Z.* p. 65.

[48] Müller, Lydia, *op. cit.*, pp. 53f.

[49] Several letters and reports are printed in *WtQ* 1930, pp. 1086f.

There were various Biblical injunctions which served to enforce that surrender of acquisitiveness and self-interest required for a vigorous community. The Hutterites recalled a favorite text of the medieval mystics:

In the 5th of Matthew Christ says: "blessed are the meek *(die geistlich Armen),* for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." They are also those who, excused from the world, given over and abandoned for the sake of Christ's will, have no more ownership; whoever is driven by the Spirit into this poverty and submission, the same shall be blessed. But whoever stands in opposition shall be wretched."[50]

The argument sometimes rotates around Matt. 19:21—"sell that thou hast," or James 1:17—"every good gift and every perfect gift is from above," or another passage of similar significance. And occasionally there is a general argument belonging to the early years —". . . the animals in the wood and the birds in the air are free"— reflecting the old peasant movements.[51] But above all and most frequently we are referred to Acts 2, 4, 5, the vision of the church at Jerusalem.[52] For the church of Acts was a "covenant toward perfection," a model for the true fellowship of saints.

In conclusion, *ain* and *gmain* builds the Lord's house and is *rain,* but *aigen, mein, dein, sein* rends the house of the Lord and is *unrain.*[53] Gottes Wort Wär Nit so Schwär Wan Nur Der Aigen Nutz Nit Wär.[54]

The nursery rhymes taught the children community along with the alphabet. The practice of Biblical communism is basically for the revitalization of the church; it is a "vocational" witness and directed to that end rather than any general social hope. Hutterite communism must not be confused with Utopian ideas.

When true Christianity was permitted to wane and depart, the community life became an unbearable burden, it failed utterly. Twice in their history the community of goods was abandoned by the Hutterites through religious decline, to be taken up again through a revival of religion.[55]

The opponents of the Anabaptists learned fairly early to distinguish between Hutterite communism and revolution, and the Hutterites strongly dissociated themselves from the events at Münster. The questions directed toward traveling missioners in court would indicate the authorities' knowledge of the difference between

[50] Wolkan, Rudolph, ed., *Geschicht-Buch der Hutterischen Brüder* (Macleod, Alta. and Vienna, 1923) p. 220.

[51] The Articles of Kyburg (May 2, 1525). No. 703 in *Egli,* p. 320. The Regensperg Articles (May, 1525), No. 729, *ibid.,* pp. 340-43.

[52] Riedemann, Peter, *op. cit.,* pp. 40, 94-5.

[53] "Eine liebe unterrichtung Ulrichen Stadlers . . . ," in *WtQ* 1938, p. 222.

[54] Conclusion to the third of the Five Articles (1547), *ibid.,* p. 247.

[55] Horsch, John, *op. cit.* p. xvi. Also, p. 4.

communism by voluntary submission and communism by force. The sum of the matter is that a Christian should not have anything apart from his brother; both are pilgrims and walk the martyrs' way, and their citizenship is in another city than the city of this world. If any will not share, then the Lord's Supper may be closed to him.

Item: Our Christian faith says, a holy Christian church and a communion *(Gemeinschaft)* of saints; whoever now recognizes the communion *(Gemeinschaft)* of saints with the mouth but does not maintain Community *(Gemeinschaft)*, he is false.[56]

It is important to add that there was a heavy note of restraint in the Hutterite writing about community. There was none of the joy in poverty and simplicity which we remember in connection with St. Francis. The Anabaptist Hutterites leave their accustomed ways with pain and heavy hearts, recognizing that the path is the path of suffering and martyrdom. Individualism is a sin against God; the union is not a positive and hopeful program for economic purposes, but an inescapable religious mandate.

The stress upon sharing characterized all groups among the Anabaptists, although the communism of the Hutterites was unique to them. Hut said he did not teach to sell property, but to share with the needy.[57] Hubmaier said he stood for sharing, but not communism.[58] This was the familiar interpretation during the first decade, and continued in all groups except the Hutterites and the "fringe" community at Münster. It was a communism of consumption, quite thorough-going at times, but without much system and without compulsion.[59] Wolfgang Brandhuber related the Hutterian communism to a historical necessity, and said that it may not always be fitting to have it;[60] the command of Jesus to share is what is important, not the particular external organization of it. Yet the Hutterites became, through the years, very critical of those who were not as thorough-going in their surrender of individualism as they. Jakob Widemann debated with Hubmaier's successor, Spitalmaier, and complained especially that the loosely organized congregation at Nikolsburg was neglecting its duty to the refugees of the faith.[61] But all branches of Anabaptism started at the same point: in time

[56] In the Five Articles (1547), printed in *WtQ* 1938, p. 244.

[57] Testimony of Hans Hut (1527), No. 51 in *WtQ* 1934, pp. 41-44.

[58] Letter to the authorities at Zürich (March, 1526). No. 940 in *Egli*, II, 449.

[59] Certain groups frowned upon the Hutterite discipline; Confession of the Windesheim "Anabaptists" (April 16, 1531). No. 242 in *WtQ* 1934, p. 219. Also, p. 238.

[60] Brandhuber, Wolfgang, "Ein sendbrief an die gmain Gottes zu Rottenburg am In" (1529), in *WtQ* 1938, p. 138.

[61] Smith, C. Henry, *The Story of the Mennonites* (Berne, Indiana, 1941), p. 65.

of need, following the model of the life of the heroes of the faith. Only historical circumstance and cultural adaptation made the difference between the Hutterites and other Brethren.

The Lord's Supper (Abendmahl)

The Lord's Supper became an especially important symbol to the Anabaptists. They took the description of the remembrance as given in Matt. 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, and I Cor. 11, and interpreted the event in the most straightforward and simple fashion. In the third of the Seven Articles (Feb. 24, 1527)[62] and in the second of the Five Articles (1547)[63] the Mass is treated as a memorial only.

> He had taught the flesh and blood of Christ was not transformed in the bread, only, as Christ had demonstrated it bodily they should understand it spiritually. The bread which He had broken was the Gospel; if He had not broken it, it would not have come into the whole world. If they took and appropriated the Word and clasped it in their hearts, as Christ had taught, they were benefited in spirit by the body of Christ; and the cup, which Christ had given His disciples, meant His suffering, and the blood in the cup was the blood of Christ in the flesh of men; and, if the man was a Christian, he had the blood of Christ, and to the degree that suffering becomes flesh the cup was in blood.[64]

John 6:32-35—"I am the bread of life"—appears very frequently during the course of the discussions,[65] the implication being that the Master was speaking in figurative fashion at the time of the Supper as well. The Anabaptists were certain that the materialistic interpretation was not needed to give the true meaning. There are other Scriptural arguments as well: Christ could not be many thousands of times in the bread and also on the cross;[66] He could not be "at the right hand of God the Father" and also in the bread;[67] the simple understanding of the Supper was the proper one. When one of the priests with some sophistication defended the Mass against an accusation of lying in saying the true flesh and blood were there in the bread and wine, his opponent shouted, "We won't have the argument from philosophy; you shall argue by the Gospel!"[68]

62 *Beck*, pp, 41-44.

63 The second of the Five Articles (1547), in *WtQ* 1938, p. 242.

64 Confession of several newly baptized at Beiersdorf (1528), No. 82 in *WtQ* 1934, p. 84.

65 Confession of Ansbach "Anabaptists" (May 10, 1529), No. 176, *ibid.*, p. 165. Also in Langenmantel, Hans, "Ein anders gespräch vom abentmahl Christi und seiner gemeinschaft aufs kurzeste," in *WtQ* 1938, p. 135; Zaunring, Georg, "Ain kurtze annzaigung des abentmals Christy," *ibid.*, p. 145.

66 *Z.*, p. 186.

67 Schiemer, Leonhard, "Ein Epistl an die gmain zu Rottenburg geschrieben . . . ," in *WtQ* 1938, p. 54.

68 No. 369 (June 23, 1523), in *Egli*, I. 133.

The opposition of the radicals to the Mass was, after all, in the line of the Swiss Reformation.[69] But they also denied the special office of the clergy which gave the rite its liturgical meaning and objective character, and tied the ceremony to the general concern for a purified and perfected community. Baptism had been the center of debate in the first days at Zürich; in Wittenberg, where the Reformers held to the Real Presence, it was the doctrine of the Supper over which controversy raged. Throughout the entire movement, however, the symbols became linked to the drive toward a rigorous internal ethic. As with many sectarian movements from the time of the Donatists,[70] the moral and ethical character of both celebrant and partaker were discussed strenuously. And many who were called into court for abstaining from the communion services of the church said that they could not attend because they were not worthy.

The Anabaptists believed that an unworthy person might do great hurt to himself by taking part in the remembrance,[71] and defined unworthiness in ethical and moral terms. It was an important matter for the brethren to admonish each other and exercise the spiritual government which would prevent such disaster. And it was especially vital that the entire congregation should be worthy of the Supper; no one should take part in a "mixed" celebration, where the evil and good were not separated. Therefore they condemned the congregations of the state church, where no spiritual government obtained and yet people went to the Supper.

> If one refrained from sins, made penance and led a pure, improving life, he still should not go to our Supper, for the flesh and blood of Christ were not literally in our Supper as we maintain. But whoever was pure from sin might break the bread as Christ broke it. Wine and bread are only a remembrance.[72]

In this fashion one of the orthodox reported the Anabaptist attitude.

In this doctrine, as in the others, we find that the cornerstone is the community of believers. In court, one of the Anabaptists said that Christ was in the community of faithful, and not in the bread and wine.

[69] Article by Neff, "Abendmahl," in *ML* I (1913), 6-9.

[70] "The Donatist peasant rising believed only in the sacramental power of 'pure' priests, and not in its character *indelibilis:* this was the beginning of the great series of sect-movements, with their hostility to the Church . . ."; Troeltsch, Ernst, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (New York, 1931), 2 vols., I. 209f. Also footnote 165, p. 338.

[71] Repeatedly the "Anabaptist" before the court would testify he avoided the communion because he was unworthy; see instances in *WtQ* 1930, pp. 199, 240, 252f.

[72] Confession of Simon Krausshaars von Neckar-Gröningen (May, 1559), No. 190, *ibid.*, pp. 178f.

The Christian community is his living temple, wherein he dwells and remains, O brethren, in that and not in stone houses. Because Christ will dwell in this (economy) he may not be in the baked bread.[73]

In any case, the sacraments were only symbols of a certain relationship within the community and between the True Church and her Lord. The metaphor of the Didache reappears frequently, relating itself to the working of God through a suffering and martyr people. Luther's 1519 sermon, *Von dem hochwürdigen Sakrament des heiligen wahren Leichnams Christi* told the story of the working of the corn and grapes to become bread and wine, and was popular among the radicals.[74] "As the bread which I give you, brought together from many kernels, is fused and united through the water, so will we be united through the faith that Christ died for us."[75] This is the kneading and working which marks the martyr people, who are worked and formed by the Master of history according to His plan. It was not a material partaking. But He had thereby instituted the cup of the New Covenant, which is Suffering."[76]

The Authority of Civil Government (Apostolic Nonresistance)

The relation of the Anabaptists to the magistrate *(Obrigkeit)* is the most difficult question, one about which there is still dispute. Most probably this is because the refusal of their descendants to bear arms is a very practical problem to the government which attempts to wage total war and still respect conscientious objection. There is further difficulty in analyzing the evidence from the early groups due to the existence of the state-church system at that time; certainly a good deal of the distance from government was due to the Anabaptist denunciation of "official" religion. Further, the question of co-operation in a free society was not faced by any of the early leaders and groups; for the sake of their very existence they kept as far from the persecuting authorities as possible. In submissions it was customary to require the recanting Anabaptists

[73] Zaunring, Georg, in *WtQ* 1938, p. 147.

[74] *WtQ* 1938, p. xiv. Menno used the same simile: 'Gelijck als dan een naturrlijck brood van veel korens in de meulen gebroocken met water gekneet/ van des vyers hittighydt tot een broodt gebacken wordt/ alsoo wordt oock de gemeynte Christi uyt veel geloovigen/ met de meulen des Godlijcken woordts in have herten gebroken/ met dat water des Heyligen Geests/ en met dat vyer der reynder ongeverweder liefden in een lichaem gedoopt.' Cited in Krahn, Cornelius, *Menno Simons (1496-1561) Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Theologie der Taufgesinnten,* part II. *Der Gemeinde begriff des Menno Simons in Rahmen seines Lebens und seiner Theologie* (Karlsruhe i.B., 1936).

[75] No. 247 (1564) in *WtQ* 1930, p. 241.

[76] "Rechenschaft und bekanntnus des glaubens . . ." (Trieste, 1539), in *WtQ* 1938, p. 201.

to swear to carry the sword and fulfill their bounden duty to the authorities. Conscription did not then exist, but it is plain that the radicals were striking at the very heart of feudal civilization when they refused sword duty to the lord or magistrate, and attacked the union of church and state. By their negative attitude they were just as dangerous to the establishment as the more obviously subversive revolutionaries.

> Concerning the worldly magistrate, we recognize indeed that it was established and ordered to chasten the evil, but it is not given that a Christian can or may be it, for Christ commands one shall not resist evil. Item, we shall love our enemies.[77]

If, as some have claimed, the early Christians brought about the collapse of the Roman Empire by their restraint, then just as truly the Anabaptists foreshadowed the collapse of feudal Christendom. It must not be inferred, however, that this was their intention; they took their stand simply upon the Biblical ground that Jesus said, "love your enemies, . . . and pray for them which . . . persecute you" (Sermon on the Mount. Matt. 5:44). God, in His good time, purposed to give them the kingdom.

Among the Swiss there was a general skepticism about waging war, derived in part from their relation to the mercenary system.

> The pope, the emperor, and the king of France were the chief employers of Swiss troops. The mercenary system was not morally elevating either to the soldiers themselves or to the influential citizens who were pensioned by the foreign powers in consideration of their good offices. But it undoubtedly had the effect of destroying superstitious veneration for the church whose carnal battles they were hired to wage and of fostering freedom of thought. When in 1518 the pope asked for twelve thousand Swiss troops to fight against the Turks, they somewhat reluctantly promised ten thousand, adding that if he liked he might take in addition the two thousand priests.[78]

Zwingli revolted against this system, and in the first flush of his evangelical faith appeared to be a pacifist.[79] Bonifacius Amerbach so strongly disapproved of taking up the sword for the Gospel in the Second Cappel War that he avowed open sympathy for the Roman Catholics.[80] But the objection of the Brethren was not humanitarian and cultural. They were concerned first of all with the purification of the Christian witness, separating the True Church

[77] "Contra Anabaptistarum opinionem." (August, 1557?), No. 174 in *WtQ* 1930, pp. 148f.

[78] Newman, A. H., *op. cit.*, p. 88.

[79] Correll, Ernst, *op. cit.*, footnote on p. 28.

[80] Burckhardt-Biedermann, Th., *Bonifacius Amerbach und die Reformation* (Basel, 1894), p. 91.

from power-consciousness and imperial interest. The Anabaptist attitude was primarily "defenselessness" and not "pacifism."[81]

The magistrate as policing authority is of historical origin, given by God as a necessary control of men's drive to sin. Hubmaier dated the origin of government right after the fall in Eden, Genesis 3:16. Riedemann dated it right after the deluge; until that time God ruled men directly.[82] Both revolutionary and peaceful Anabaptists were agreed that the power of the magistrate did not reach within the Christian community,[83] but the latter made the distinction on a vocational basis. They had no hope of bringing into being a society without coercion. The duty of the Christian community was the vocation of spiritual perfection. ". . . . you shall not participate in strange sins. Therefore we don't carry sword, nor lance, nor guns, nor any kind of arms or weapons."[84]

As Jakob Huter put it, "They must put away all outer and iron weapons . . . and arm themselves with spiritual (weapons)."[85] The attitude of restraint toward the magistrate's calling and various functions related to it is based upon the thought that there are two different worlds involved, and the things pertaining to life in one are not proper in the other.

All warring, upheaval, concern for worldly good, killing and hating are now forbidden within the new dispensation. There is an eschatological note in it, as though the things of the last age are different, and a small minority is already living in the last age in the midst of a society of force which is already passing away.

Yet further it was noted that the Christian was not permitted to be a magistrate. Wherefore? The world regime is after the flesh, but the Christian regime is according to the spirit. Their house and dwelling is physical, in this world, where the Christian's dwelling-place is in heaven. The world citizenship is in this world, but the Christian's citizenship is in heaven. Their warfare and armaments are fleshly and only according to the flesh, but the Christian's arms and warfare are spiritual against the sovereignty of the devil. The worldly are equipped with armor according to the flesh, but the Christian's arms are the armor of God, that is truth, righteousness, peace, faith, sanctity, and with the Word of God . . . ."[86]

81 For the definitive Mennonite treatment on this point, see Hershberger, Guy Franklin, *War, Peace, and Nonresistance* (Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1944) pp. 219f. See also, by this writer, "The Inadequacy of Modern Pacifism" in *Christianity and Society* (Spring, 1946), pp. 18-23.

82 Heyer, Fritz, *loc. cit.*, p. 85.

83 *Ibid.*, p. 89.

84 Riedemann, Peter, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

85 "Anschleg und fürwenden der blinden und verkerten Welt . . . ," in *WtQ* 1938, p. 186.

86 *Ibid.*, p. 199.

The Christian is fighting a different battle with different weapons from those of the world.

The angel with a sword in the mouth indicates "That for us Christians also the sword doesn't belong in the hand, but in the mouth—namely, the sword of the Spirit."[87]

The authority given for this restraint toward government and civil functions was the New Testament command and example of Christ. Andreas Castelberger, the earliest to emphasize this testimony, considered the warrior no better than a murderer.[88] The Sermon on the Mount was enough for him, and the command of Jesus against the oath (taken by vassals and soldiers): "Let thy words be 'Yea, Yea,' and 'Nay, Nay.' "[89] The Master forbade all swearing (Matt. 5:34 and James 5:12). And as for executing the office of judgment and wrath, "we shall love our enemies."

It is not always clear, however, at what points the line may be drawn. Some said that they would support only the magistrate who obeyed the Bible: to put down evil and aid the good. Others, and they were the larger number, claimed that the magistrate was given for the sins of the world and should be obeyed in all things not offensive to conscience, whether persecuting or tolerating. The Swiss Brethren refused to bear arms but paid all taxes, for which the Hutterites criticized them on the war tax.[90] Holding the magistrate's office was generally enough to ban a person from the congregation, but Menno permitted such to remain members.[91] Except among the revolutionary groups there seemed to be no general social concern, no mind for questions of public policy. A more general pacifist note seems to enter with the saying of Grebel that Christians should not kill Christians; and a case of non-co-operation occurred among the slaves in the war galleys at Trieste (1539), who refused to put their hands to the oars although beaten for it.[92] These were rare departures in an otherwise Bible-centered nonresistance.

In reducing the various tendencies to a scheme of logical emphases, we note three prominent accents in the Anabaptist view of the magistrate: *first,* their opposition to compulsion in religion; *second,* their opposition to revolution; *third,* their sense of destiny as the church of the martyrs.

[87] Fourth of the Five Articles (1547), *ibid.,* p. 252.

[88] No. 623 (Jan. c.20, 1525), in *Egli,* I, 276f.

[89] See article by Neff, "Eid," in *ML* I (1913) 535-46.

[90] From the testimony of some who came from the Swiss to join the Hutterian Brethren (1543), in *WtQ* 1938, p. 265.

[91] Smithson, R. J., *The Anabaptists* (London, 1935), p. 125.

[92] *Z,* p. 205.

Their opposition to compulsion in religion grew out of their sense of the incongruity between the early church pattern and the establishment. When they were persecuted they grew even more rugged in their conviction. Persecution of the faithful is a mark of the Beast, one of the proofs that the establishment was no true church. It is useful at this point to call attention to the way in which resistance to such persecution is tied to Anabaptist nonresistance. The only power recognized within the congregation was spiritual government.

The Anabaptist opposition to revolution grew out of their pessimism concerning power and the possibilities of social betterment. After the Münster episode, all branches of the *Stille* reacted strongly against ethical crusades outside the True Church, and vigorously asserted the authority of the magistrate.

> Our will and mind are not, however, to do away with worldly government or not to be obedient to it in goods and sanctions. For a government shall and must be in the world among men just as the daily bread and just as the schoolmaster must have the rods among the children. For because the great house of this world will not admit and let rule the Word of God, the knaves and rascals or children of this world who pursue no Christian piety must yet have a worldly and gallows-piety . . . . Therefore the magistrate is an institution of God.[93]

But they would not serve in that capacity themselves; the calling of a Christian is to other work. The ban was exercised within the community, and the law-abiding quality of the Anabaptists was to be such that their restraint at this single point of faith should not lead any to think that they were not wholeheartedly for good order and sound government.

The Anabaptist sense of destiny as the Church of the Martyrs is extremely important. The Bible, which tells of the Good Shepherd, frequently calls His flock "the sheep."

> By sheep Christians alone were meant. A sheep is a meek, weaponless, submissive beast, that has no other defence for itself than to run as long as it can and may. And it resembles the governance of the sword not at all, as little as a sheep resembles a wolf or lion.[94]

Christians expect persecution and exile, for this is the inevitable lot of those who submit and will not wrestle for political control; and it is also the martyrs' testimony which validates their Christian authority in the baptism of blood.[95]

[93] *Z*, p. 307.

[94] Fourth in the Five Articles (1547), in *WtQ* 1938, p. 249.

[95] Stauffer, Ethelbert, "Märtyrertheologie und Täuferbewegung," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* LII (1933) 545-98, 588. The baptismal formulae are martyr-confessionals.

In most quarters of the Mennonite movement today the peace testimony has lost all eschatological content. On the continent the testimony itself has been generally abandoned, but in America it is associated with an agrarian economy and has survived. Dutch and German writers have attempted to show that the early Anabaptists were not really nonresistant in the complete sense, but rather opposed to revolution and restrained toward government because persecuted.[96] This interpretation has been combated by the Americans,[97] who combine the traditional testimony and cultural primitivism in a strictly "vocational" way. It is hard to deny that the early New Testament literalism cuts through most of the historical distinctions, and the Anabaptist vision of the church as it was in the age of heroic witnessing makes the later discussions seem quite pragmatic and historical.

When we survey, both historically and dogmatically, the ways of "nestling back into the world," we come to the conclusion that cultural causes which have lost their missionary passion and sense of a new world to come are hardly more true to original Anabaptism than those who have acclimated themselves to commerce and warring. For the "evangelical *Täufer*" linked their suffering nonresistance to the evangel of Him who commanded, "Go ye into all the world . . ." (Matt. 28:19), and they had great expectations concerning a time to come. After the long centuries of the Dispersion they were gathering together again the faithful people of the Lord, to be His blessed community and to live the life for which He gave precept and example. And in that restored community there dwelt the promise of great things to come on earth.

Nevertheless there are today among the Mennonites those not content with cultural isolation, who are attempting to make vivid testimony today—as did their fathers of old—to life in the true Church of Christ. And there is a wider circle of Free Churchmen, holding the Mennonites in fraternal esteem, who appreciate their great indebtedness to the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century for permanent evidences of the work of God among His people.

[96] Mannhardt, W., *Die Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten* (B. Hermann Hemmpels Wwe., 1863), Marienburg & Danzig; van der Smissen, H., "Der Grundsatz der Wehrlosigkeit in seiner historischen Entwicklung dargestellt," *Mennonitische Blätter* 35 (1888) 21:121-24, 22:129-30; Vos, K., *De Weerlosheid der Doopsgezinden* (Amsterdam, 1924). In general, these writers assert that Anabaptist nonresistance was not a dogmatic question but a matter of historical development and decline.

[97] Cf. Horsch, John, "An Historical Survey of the Position of the Mennonite Church on Nonresistance," *MQR* I (1927) 3:5-22, 4:3-20.

MENNO SIMONS' THEOLOGY REVIEWED

LEONARD VERDUIN

Years ago, when your present servant had a little more leisure, he tried his hand at photography. And one of the first things he learned was that close-up pictures are hard to take. Any amateur with a dollar box camera, with or without a lens, can take a picture —it may even win a prize—of a distant landscape; but to photograph successfully something very close to the camera is something else again. A carpenter walks into the street to see how a window he has just placed really looks, and a housewife backs away to the farthest side of the room to see whether the picture she has just dusted still "hangs right" as she says.

Something of the same thing is true in the realm of historic, *and theological,* perspective. As we look back, for example, to the issues that agitated men in the sixteenth century, we may not be able always to say that distance lends enchantment to the view but we do feel, and we have a right to feel, that we have the benefit of a perspective that four centuries give.

One of the things we may be sure of is that the acrimony that characterized the theological polemics of the age of the Reformation was to a large extent uncalled for. Whether one reads the more strident passages in Menno Simons or the no less strident passages in the writings of those who opposed him one could wish these men had been less vehement, especially over positions not even mutually exclusive. The fact that the spiritual children of Menno Simons can invite to such a conference as this, and that not merely as an onlooker (which were already a significant thing) but as a participant, a person who stands in the tradition that Menno felt called to oppose, that fact is eloquent that we have learned a few things. It so happens that it would be hard to find a spiritual descendant of Calvin who does not deplore it that he on occasion called Menno a "braying ass"; just as it would be hard to find a spiritual descendant of Menno who would want to assert that Gellius Faber, Martin Micron, John à Lasco, and Calvin were agents of Antichrist.

We must not fail to add that our age may fall into opposite but equally serious error. One can go so far in this give-and-take age as to leave the impression that theology does not matter and that theological conviction is a liability. Four hundred years from now, if the Lord tarries that long, men will stand amazed at our theological nonchalance. That you have met to come to grips with theo-

logical issues is evidence that not all people, not all Christian people, have capitulated to the devil-serving notion that theology does not matter. A thousand times better to disagree, and with some vehemence even, than to adopt the supercilious attitude of the modern churchman whose only response to theology is "so what?"

As we of a so much later day look anew at Menno Simons and his theological ideas we will all of us, Mennonite and non-Mennonite alike, find elements there that we consider to be eminently and uniquely true. No doubt we will find items in his thought that seem to us partly true. And we may find strains that seem to us quite rejectable, strains that we feel we should repudiate. At any rate, that has been my experience as I had occasion to take a rather comprehensive view of Menno's theological writings. I am quite sure that every Mennonite experiences the same things as he reads Menno—although it is probable that his assessments would not be exactly identical. It may be useful to say that likewise even the most ardent Calvinist of our generation would react in the very same way to Calvin's theology, finding areas of complete agreement, and of quite definite disagreement.

I

First of all then let us touch upon a matter in which Menno and his associates took a position which we have come to consider closer to the truth than that held by his critics one and all. We refer to his conception of the non-continuity of the church with the society in the midst of which the church stands. Menno, as is commonly known, rejected the medieval notion of the continuity of church with state and so anticipated the position now taken almost for granted by nearly all comers but a position quite radically novel in the sixteenth century, that of the separation of church and state.

Whatever may be true of the other sixteenth century reformatory movements in their earliest inception—and of this we wish to say a few things presently—Menno and his followers never allowed themselves to be seduced by the siren song of establishment. And that is more than can be said of any of the other movements of the day. Not all the Protestant leaders were quite so semipolitical as was Zwingli but all fell into the pattern of state espousal sooner or later, and mostly sooner. And it is not difficult to show that just as soon as the several Protestant groups went into coalition with the local secular power their fine gold began to dim.

This flirting with the secular princes on the part of the non-Mennonite groups can of course be readily explained historically.

(I said readily explained, not readily justified.) The Medieval Church had very early, at the end of subapostolic times, fallen into precisely that pattern. And all through the Middle Ages it had boasted a secular arm. All through the Middle Ages it had enjoyed establishment of the extremest variety.[1] Small wonder that the temptation to fight fire with fire proved too great for one Reformer after the other. To Menno's credit be it said that he never succumbed to the temptation to hide under the apron of a worldly prince.

Of course it should not be forgotten that he never had an opportunity. No prince or group of nobles ever made overtures to him to "hit it off together"—if we may borrow that expression from the street. But that ties in with Menno's rigorism and with his uncompromising stand. He simply did not attempt to curry favor with the secular power. Not doing that in a time when to do just that was everywhere the vogue may explain to an extent the vicious opposition that the Anabaptist met everywhere. Menno not only did not make a bid for the favor of princes; he did not expect it either. And this in turn hangs together with Menno's very much attenuated doctrine of that common grace whereby, apart from the grace of regeneration, God restrains the full course of sin and the utter hostility of sinful man to the Gospel. We read in Menno's *Fundamentboek:*

> Therefore do not comfort one another with senseless comfort and unfounded hope as do those who think that the Word will yet be taught and practiced without the cross . . . . tear from your heart the harmful thought to hope for different times lest you be deceived by your false hope. I have known some people who waited for a day of freedom; but they did not live long enough to see their hopes realized. (fol. 6).

This may be a bit too dismal forecast (as indeed history has shown it to be) resting as we have said it does upon an attenuated doctrine of common grace, but it is infinitely much nearer the Bible and Biblical truth than is the view of the liberal theologian who identifies the special and the common grace of God, a trick whereby the experience of the cross pinches out completely.

Everywhere men have begun to see that Menno's view of the

[1] In 1150 St. Bernard, addressing Pope Eugene III said: "Two swords belong to Peter. One is in his hand, the other is at his command whenever it is necessary to draw it. Both the spiritual and the material swords belong to the church; but the latter must be drawn for the church, the former by the church. One sword belongs to the priest, the other to the soldier but subject to the orders of the priest." In the famous (or shall I say notorious?) bull *Unam Sanctam* (1302) Boniface VIII speaks of "two swords, namely one spiritual and one temporal . . . . the latter wielded for the church, the former by the church; one by the priest, the other by kings and soldiery but at the bidding of the priest." The same monstrous theology is repeated by Thomas Aquinas and stands unretracted to this day!

otherness of the Church of Christ is an essentially sound theological item and eminently Biblical. Caesar and Christ are not one and the same Master; nor are the kingdoms of this world, as such, an integral part of the kingdom of heaven. This Menno saw as few of his day did. Honor to whom honor is due. Menno may have gone too far when he assumed that any man who sleeps comfortably in bed is by that token unfaithful—but he had a deep insight into the nature of the Gospel, that it is not of man nor according to man and that hostility to it is always to be expected in this dispensation.

True enough, his view of the place of the church in the society of men may easily lead to the aloofness from society that has so frequently marred the evangelical witness, as, for example, in present day Fundamentalism, a latter-day variety of Christianity that accepts no responsibility for society as such and sees in the world no more than a recruiting ground for more Fundamentalists. This aloofness from society is not necessarily implied in Menno's position, countless non-Mennonite writers to the contrary notwithstanding.[2] If Menno had had an opportunity to step out into the public eye—a thing that all his life was denied him so that his friends when he died very prudently buried him in his cabbage patch—if Menno had been given a chance he would no doubt have jumped into the arena of public affairs to oppose evil and promote its opposite. For he knew, and acknowledged, that the magistracy is from God.

It will be recalled that earlier in this paper we threw out a remark to which we promised to return. We said, "Whatever may be true of the other sixteenth century reformation movements in their earlier conception . . . ." We wish to enlarge upon this remark before we move on to our second item as we take a second look at Menno.

It has frequently been asserted that the Anabaptists were the only group that sought religious reformation without going up to their necks into the politics of the day, the only group that tried for a change in the religious life without a parallel change in political life, the only movement that was not semipolitical. This is not altogether true. There were other currents that were equally apart from the political aspirations of the day. Up to 1560, let us say, native Protestantism in the Netherlands at least carried on not only

[2] Apostolic Christianity, the kind of Christianity that Menno wished to recover was not aloof. A passage from the Epistle to Diognetus testifies eloquently to this. We read in said epistle, (the reference is to the Christians of the second century): "They live in their own fatherland but then as sojourners. They take part in all things as citizens but they suffer as do foreigners. Every fatherland is to them a strange land and every strange land is a fatherland."

without hope of espousal by the secular powers but also without anything that looked like a bid for such espousal. It was not until shortly before 1565, when the conspiring nobles in the Low Countries sought out the consistories of the "churches under the cross" as they called themselves, that the non-Catholics began to fall into any political pattern. Very significantly these conspiring nobles, whose religious convictions in so far as they had any were certainly not Protestant, were rebuffed by the native ministers who headed these churches.[3] And then these conspiring nobles decided to import a variety of preacher that would play ball with them. With the influx of these Genevan and French Huguenot preachers the coalition between the nobles and the consistories begins. And with them a chapter, a most intriguing chapter, in the history of Protestantism in the Low Countries ended. The influence of this older school wanes from this moment on, although the strain does not become wholly extinct for a long time after.[4]

Even toward the Anabaptists with whom they differed at many points these older Protestants were quite lenient. At the worst they call them misled and erring brethren. Nowhere do they clamor for their liquidation. One of these, Guido de Brés, one of the most caustic critics of Anabaptist Theology, declared that he felt that Anabaptists should be stoned—but then with stones dug out of the Word of God and none other. Adrian van Haemstede, another of the native sons, rose to the defense of the Anabaptists in the London refugee church saying that they were weaker brethren in Christ.

[3] How long these occult churches had already existed no one knows. Very certainly they were holding meetings already, and regularly, before Luther put his trumpet to his lips. There were non-Catholic churches, organized and with a degree of conference connection with each other, as early as 1420.

[4] When in 1601 an edict was published in the city of Groningen, an edict aimed at all non-Reformed constituencies—by it all non-baptized minors were declared incompetent to inherit property and all who refused to take the oath were barred from public office, legislation aimed at the Anabaptists—then spokesmen of the older school called this the work of "incendiaries who wish with the bellows of Geneva to stir up again the fires of Inquisition." When some years after Jean Taffin was asked what should be done by the magistrates to check the Catholic worship and to promote the Reformed that venerable old stalwart of an earlier generation replied: "The magistrates do not exist to establish this or that religion. It is their business to see to it that every man can serve his God unmolested according to his own conscience." One of the finest arguments for toleration ever to be written in that intolerant age is the *Brief Discours envoyé au Roy Philippe*. In it the idea of plurality of religions, all equally legitimate at law, is openly and eloquently espoused. The authorship of the *Brief Discours* has long been in doubt (It was published anonymously in 1565 and Margaret of Parma is said to have pulled her beard and to have vowed that she would rather let herself be pulled in pieces than to listen to its awful council to allow more than one religion. A price was put on the head of its author.), but after much research it seems that the Belgian scholar Charles Rahlenbeck has established that the *Brief Discours* issued from the Consistory of Antwerp, Guido de Brés their pastor being the most likely candidate for its authorship. The friction that developed between the old line native leaders and the Geneva-bred coalitionists was quite severe at times, the former calling the latter Münsterites, a not too improper appellation.

He urged that even their outstanding theological aberration, that concerning the Incarnation of the Son of God, was not a denial of the Incarnation as such but only an error as to the mode of it. The freckle-faced Adrian was deposed for this lenient attitude, the opposition against him being led by folk fresh from Geneva. It seems not to have helped his cause when he said that Calvin too had erred.

Much more could be said about this pre-Calvinistic variety of Protestantism. But suffice it to have shown that Reformation without political taint was not wholly confined to the Anabaptists.

But it must be added, as has been said before, that the Anabaptists were the only people who *kept* their movement clear of political taint. The variety of Protestantism native to the Low Countries as mentioned above made way for the kind that had become prevalent everywhere, so that after a generation or two it had virtually disappeared and Calvinistic establishment had won the day. Not so Menno and his Mennonites. To this day Mennonite establishment and agitation for it is like a crow with white tail feathers—very rare indeed.

II

The next theological item at which we wish to take a look is the one about which Menno perhaps felt most strongly and wrote most vehemently—infant baptism, or rather repudiation thereof. As we all know, Menno and his group were the only ones to take this position. All the rest continued the status quo—although they opposed and fought certain excrescences that had fastened themselves upon the institution.

A careful study of Menno's writings anent this matter—and there is hardly a tract that does not broach it—will reveal, we believe, that Menno came to his position in this matter, not by way of theological argument but by way of practical experience. He saw what the institution of pedobaptism had become all over Europe, and the sight filled him with disgust. We cannot refrain from quoting a passage from Menno's works. It stands in what is perhaps his most eloquent passage although the sentiments recur in all his works. The passage occurs in Menno's *Verklaringe des Christelyken Doops*. After having given a lurid account of the life of shameless profligacy lived by the priests—an account that we know was only too sadly true to life—he goes on to say:

> And so harlot and scoundrel priest cohabit in shameful adultery and fornication until due to the natural outcome they can no longer hide and cover the matter. And then if it concerns his servant girl or the neighbor's

daughter, the poor child must go on a pilgrimage or the matter must be blamed to the janitor, or the neighbor, or the neighbor's son maybe. And if his neighbor's wedded wife is involved then the fictitious father, ignorant of his wife's unfaithfulness, must be the parent of such an illegitimate child. What a mess!

And brethren, they two, the harlot and the scoundrel priest have been baptized in their infancy and for that reason claim to be Christians and boast the blood of Christ. But what kind of Christians they are one may conclude from their conduct.

Infant baptism coupled with a church organization knowing no discipline for conduct (The medieval church had virtually only one censurable sin, and it did not touch people's morals, the "sin" of detouring or failing to patronize the biggest racket of all time.) and conceived of as a magic means of salvation by effecting regeneration in *ex opere operato* fashion can very readily, yes, must inescapably become the occasion of great evil. And any man who has come to grips with the realities of the Gospel must be horrified, as Menno honestly was, at a sight, common all over Europe in his day and vividly described by him in the same tract, of the

noisy idolatrous sham practiced upon infants . . . a nurse saying as she picks up the child out of its mother's arms, 'I receive from you a little heathen,' and upon returning it after a ritual of salt and candles, chrisms and spittle, exorcisms and mumbo-jumbo 'And now I return to you a little Christian'!

Menno was right that only the devil was pleased by all this.

In a word, Menno's tirade against infant baptism was occasioned by his rebellion against what he saw and what seemed to him an iniquitous thing. His own doctrine anent the matter was born of an antipathy. He did not live long enough to see what might result in a faithful church that exercises discipline and exclusion, also concerning this rite. But in his strictures all right-minded men must agree and for them rejoice. If I had lived in those days I would probably have endorsed all that Menno wrote about this matter.

Menno's repudiation of infant baptism did NOT come up out of a lower or lesser appraisal of the likelihood of grace in the hearts of children born to believing homes. In his appraisal of infant life Menno would have satisfied the most ardent pedobaptist—even though there would be some discussion as to this or that detail. Advocates of infant baptism have asserted "that believing parents may not doubt the salvation of their children dying in infancy." With this Menno would have agreed wholeheartedly. He asserts the state of grace of such children in terms that leave no doubt in one's mind:

To innocent and minor children sin is not imputed for Jesus' sake but life is promised them not via any given ceremony but out of pure grace through the advocacy of the Lord's blood, even as He said, 'Let the children come unto me,' etc. . . . even as the children in Israel, both the boys and the girls were in the covenant not by virtue of the sign but by virtue of election so are also our children in the covenant even when they are not baptized. The word of Paul stands unmoved, 'he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.' Once more be it said, to the children belongs the kingdom of heaven and they are under the promise of God's grace, through Christ, as has been said, and for that reason we believe of a truth that they are saved and holy and pure, well-pleasing to God, in the covenant and house of God . . . . And although little children have neither faith nor baptism, do not think that for that reason they are under condemnation. Ah no, they are saved in spite of all that for they have the Lord's own promise of the kingdom, not through any element, ceremony, or external means but out of grace through Christ Jesus. And for that reason we believe assuredly that they are in grace, well-pleasing to God, pure, holy, and heirs of eternal life. Yes, it is for the sake of these promises that all true believers in Christ glory in their children's salvation with assured hearts.

The question could of course be raised, if all this be true of the religious status of children of believing parents what then is there to obstruct the administration of the sign and the seal of precisely these spiritual commodities. But this must not be asked in a paper that aims to lead us as we look a second time at Menno Simons.

There was one other consideration that contributed to Menno's repudiation of infant baptism. It was his, historically again quite understandable and also quite justifiable, emphasis upon *experience*. The church out of which Menno had fled left the impression that the grace of God was quite independent and careless of human co-operation, that all you needed to do was to let the church inject the grace of God into you pretty much as the interne at the hospital injects some mysterious stuff into your arm. All he asks is that you do not oppose and that you lie as still as you conveniently can. He will see to the rest. You don't even have to know whether it is sulfa or penicillin he is giving you. In fact he may resent it if you ask. So the Catholic Church dispensed, and still dispenses, salvation. Due to this passivistic conception of the workings of God's grace the church saw nothing incongruous in a laity totally ignorant of the things that go into an *ordo salutis*. True to its passivistic emphasis it has, significantly, dropped the "Take, eat" of the Sacrament and has been satisfied to lay a consecrated wafer upon the tongue of any worshiper who will but drop his jaw. I have personally seen Jesuit priests do, in Latin, all they felt they had to do for the spiritual needs of illiterate Sioux Indians.

Menno Simons, and this he shared with all his reforming contemporaries, rebelled forcefully against this passivistic construction.

He, and they, set to preaching. He, and they, put Bibles into the hands of all whom they could reach. He, and they, urged men everywhere to enter experientially into the things of the Gospel. He, and they, revived the altogether Biblical notion that the grace of God is by no means careless of human response and co-operation. Faith, said Menno, and said they all, at least as to its *actus,* is an act of the human personality.

All this was very fine—and timely—and well said. But it remains a fact that in one's rebellion against passivistic theology one can quite easily fall into another extreme, that of an activistic theology. One can in his opposition to the notion that the grace of God is careless of human co-operation go so far as to conclude that the grace of God must wait until men are ready to go along. This can also very readily become heretical. For it is essentially true that the grace of God is an initiative-taking grace. Fact is, if grace is to be grace at all it must, in its initial thrust at least, be a movement in which God is the subject, and as yet non-co-operating man is the object. "Now that you know God" said the apostle Paul and added in the same breath "or rather now that ye are known of God." This recognition of a prior manward thrust is everywhere in the Scriptures. "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" is a statement that makes no sense in a consistently activistic theology. Nor does "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do."

In the non-catholic theologies that were contemporary with Menno there were conscious safeguards against any headlong and unrestrained reaction against the passivistic theology of the Catholic tradition. These safeguards are not nearly so evident in Menno's theology. The idea of faith as a *habitus* is almost nonexistent in him. In fact this was one of the most prevalent and pervasive criticisms leveled against his system of theology. And they who stand in the Reformed tradition four centuries later would be even less ready to go along in an all-out activism.

For this there is good historic reason. Calvinism of the Dutch variety at least has had some very sad experiences with Arminianism —the theology of unmixed activism. The Arminians in the Netherlands of the seventeenth century became the humanistic liberals in the eighteenth and nineteenth. Here in America Arminianism was, it seems, the first step whereby Liberalism gained entrance into the churches. We are even more afraid of a theology that ignores the priority of the manward thrust than were our ancestors. We have

seen under the impact of this activistic theology how the concept of revelation gives way to discovery, how salvation as a divine bestowment gives way to salvation as an achievement, how the Christ projected from heaven gives way to a Jesus projected from the earth.

No doubt Menno would also have rebelled against these modern perversions of the truth. But it remains a fact that of all the theological thinkers of the sixteenth century Menno Simons reveals the most pronounced Arminian strains—if the anachronism is permissible. Nor is it mere coincidence that the *Doopsgezinden* in the Netherlands drifted long ago into the sheerest humanistic modernism.[5] It seems unsafe to say boldly that one's integration into the salvation that is in Christ dates from the moment of one's acceptance of Him. There is a world of mystery and a mighty reality that is not sufficiently covered by any merely activistic theology. Although not all who have rejected pedobaptism have been Arminian in their soteriology yet it remains a historical fact that the two usually go together. And that for a good reason—if the grace of God must wait until men are ready to go along with it (and this is Arminianism) then the church had better wait with baptism until the candidate is ready to go along (and this is antipedobaptism.)

III

We come now to a strain in Menno's thought that satisfies us not at all. And it is a cause for rejoicing that his followers have long since repudiated one of the most flagrant implications of this strain. We refer to Menno's somewhat less than Christian view of nature as such. It is true, Menno broke quite courageously with a great many integral parts of the Catholic tradition. Many of the things that happened when the fall of the church occurred were known by Menno for what they were and were manfully attacked by him, the identification of church and empire for example. But there was one aspect of the church's fall, an integral part of it, of which Menno remained blissfully unaware and which he therefore not only failed to attack but defended unknowingly. Lest we speak in riddles let us look at this essentially ethnic strain that entered into the Catholic tradition.

Christianity has a unique and altogether radical view of evil.

[5] This early (18th century) and almost complete defection of Dutch Anabaptism to sheer liberalism is rather unique in Anabaptist history. It has been suggested that prosperity was too much for the later generations in the Low Countries; but it seems hardly true that the measure of wealth enjoyed by certain Mennonite groups elsewhere has had this effect on them. Perhaps the deterioration in the Netherlands resulted in large part from the fact that much of the best blood was early drawn off by the persecutions.

And it very early in its career declared war upon an equally radical view of evil which was common to all the ethnic systems. Instead of thinking, with Plato and all the rest, of creaturely reality as partly good in itself, partly much less so, and partly actually bad, it boldly declared the essential goodness of all and every creature in its original state. It came with a story of creation, of staccato acts of God whereby order after order was brought unto being and each punctuated with the divine appraisal 'very good.' Christianity came next with the story and the theology of a *fall* whereby this erstwhile good creature went into eclipse so that now it groans in pain and travail. By this device evil is *adjectival* in the Christian system whereas in the ethnic systems it is *substantival.* This makes all the difference in the world. In the ethnic systems our moral assignment is to avoid those areas of creaturely existence that are inherently bad; in the Christian system our moral assignment is to avoid *fallenness* wherever it is found.

In its specifically Platonic version this ethnic construction thought to find in man also various levels of propriety, various levels of worth-whileness. What transpired in man's head was most noble. That which had its seat in the thorax, the area above the diaphragm, was definitely less so. And that which had its seat below the diaphragm is quite unequivocally bad and, in Christian parlance, sinful. Man's viscera and his reproductive equipment lie in this area of liability—hence the institutions of fasting and celibacy, both *Verneinungen* of the below the diaphragm functions. The actual origin of the proscription of fish in favor of fowl on Friday quite certainly arose out of the consideration that fish propagate without copulation —the most reprehensible of the reprehensible functions! By the same line of argument eggs were permitted in the lenten diet! It is significant that also the reproductive functions are singled out and mentioned by name in the Scriptures and called "good."

Time will not permit us to trace the countless invasions of this essentially ethnic delineation of evil into the Christian tradition. Paul the Apostle already anticipated this atavism, and under the guidance of the revealing Spirit saw how the ethnic world would seek admittance for *its* constructions. For this reason he warned Timothy against those who would come up after him forbidding meats and marriage (below the diaphragm functions it will be observed). He called these notions "doctrine of devils" and he declared in a most sweeping way that *every* creature of God is good and nothing to be rejected if it be received with thanksgiving and

prayer. And well might the inspired apostle wax eloquent in his warning against any view that makes our moral assignment merely to avoid certain areas of creaturely existence. How often has not the test of the genuineness of one's Christianity been made a matter of leaving this or that *verboten* area alone, whether that area be tobacco or some other. Some years ago the very *Sunday School Times* published approvingly the testimonial of a convert ending in "and since that day I haven't used a grain of pepper"!

Menno inherited a less than Christian view of nature. He also inherited a seriously distorted doctrine of the Fall. And there is no evidence that he felt the need to break with it.

True enough Menno speaks of the Fall, and often. But he does not make clear that the lapse was not inherent in creatureliness. One gets the impression that creatures with bodies will because of that characteristic drift into sin.

The most serious implication or aspect of this ethnic evaluation of bodiliness was Menno's off-colored view of the mode of the incarnation—which happily not all Anabaptists accepted and which Menno's followers have long since repudiated. Where he got his essentially Docetic christology is an intriguing historical question, and the answer to it would cast much light upon Menno's earliest development, but it need not detain us here. What is pertinent is that this Docetic construction found its way into Christendom long before Menno took it over and that it came in as a concession to ethnic thought habits on the part of those who could not tolerate the idea of *Incarnation into our very flesh*—one of the earliest heresies to rise across the church's path, and one already known and repudiated in the New Testament epistles.

Menno has no full-orbed doctrine of the resurrection of the *body*. He speaks of men partaking of the nature of angels after the resurrection; but no glorious assertion of the delivery of the *body* from this death. The cosmic significance of Christ is left untouched by Menno. The regeneration of the creation left him uninspired.

In many ways his views continue unmodified in present day Fundamentalism. It is just as *Kultur-feindlich* as he was and for the same reason—a less than Biblical view of nature. It would seem that this strain in Menno's thought unless known and repudiated in time would serve to lead our Mennonite people very easily into the Fundamentalist camp. Certain it is that it will remain for the rest of the Protestant groups and especially for the Calvinist wing, an indigestible area in Menno's theology.

THE DOCTRINAL POSITION OF THE SWISS BRETHREN AS REVEALED IN THEIR POLEMICAL TRACTS

John C. Wenger

It is well known that the Anabaptists failed to produce an extensive systematic presentation of their theological position. This may be accounted for by three factors: the severe persecution which proscribed the necessary leisure to produce a theology, the martyrdom of their first leaders who alone were university trained men, and the disinterest which the Anabaptists had in theological system as such. This does not mean that the evangelical Anabaptists were indifferent to doctrinal truth nor that they lacked well-defined doctrinal standards. It does mean that they were more interested in applying Christianity to life, in evangelism and holy living, than in doctrinal formulations and systems.

It should also be noted that sixteenth century Protestants retained the broad theistic views which they had learned as Roman Catholics: the sovereignty and grace of a personal God, the deity and mediatorship of Jesus Christ, the divine inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, the genuine significance of prayer, the fact of life after death in a hereafter, and many other major concepts. This debt to Catholicism is sometimes overlooked by Protestants.

The Anabaptists agreed in part with the Protestant state churchmen and differed sharply in other respects.[1] They agreed with them in the rejection of the sacerdotalism and sacramentalism of Catholicism, but they rejected other aspects of the Reformed and Lutheran program by insisting on liberty of conscience, the rejection of the state church system and of all doctrines and practices for which they found no support in Scripture: they were the Biblicists of the day. They were sharply critical of the Protestant theologians for the way they employed subtle theological dialectic to "prove" doctrines and practices which the Anabaptists considered extra-Biblical and even actually contrary to Christ's Gospel. The Anabaptist disinterest in formal theological study, as contrasted with a strict Biblicism, led practically to great intensity of personal devotion and intellectually to various Biblical paradoxes.[2] There was

[1] Cf. J. C. Wenger: *The Doctrines of the Mennonites,* Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1950, *passim.*

[2] Donovan E. Smucker: "The Theological Triumph of the Early Anabaptist-Mennonites: The Re-discovery of Biblical Theology in Paradox," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review,* XIX, 1 (January, 1945), 5-26.

also a strong eschatological consciousness among the brethren: they felt that they were living in the days which were prophesied in the Apocalypse of John.

The present paper is based primarily on a series of Swiss Brethren tracts from the first decade of the movement, 1525-35, which series was published as a composite volume around the year 1600.

Michael Sattler's *Brüderlich Vereinigung,*[3] a Confession of Faith adopted by a group of Swiss Brethren on February 24, 1527, treats of seven main concepts. (1) Baptism is to be administered to those who manifest divine regeneration in their manner of life, who believe in their forgiveness in Christ, who share ethically in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and who voluntarily request baptism. The Brethren label infant baptism "the highest and chief abomination of the pope." (2) Church discipline ("the ban") is to be exercised over those who have united with the Brotherhood and who fail to realize in life their high calling in Christ. Those overtaken by sin are to be counseled first in private, and only later exposed publicly and excommunicated if they insist on continuing in sin. Only those may participate in the communion service who are walking as becometh saints, "so that we may break and eat one bread, with one mind and in one love, and may drink of one cup." (3) The communion service is not merely the celebration of a personal redemption; it is also the symbol of a common faith in Christ, of a corporate life in His body, the church *(Gemeinde)*. Hence the Brethren practiced close communion. They could not bring themselves to commune with those masses of former Catholics who as members of the Protestant state churches rejoiced in their freedom from Catholic "bondage" without accepting the cross of the true Christian. To be in Christ's Brotherhood involved for the Brethren a sharp break with the sin of unregenerate mankind, of those still in bondage to Satan. The believers who eat of the communion bread must first actually be one bread "if one is truly to break bread according to the command of Christ." (4) The rift in fellowship between the saints and the wicked is not confined to the breaking of bread, however. It is a total separation which involves social intercourse and extends to all of life. Since all men are sharply divided into two classes, "none can have part with the other." Indeed we are commanded by God to come out from among them and to be separate, "and thus He will be our God and we shall be His sons and daughters." The command of the Revelator to withdraw from

[3] Edited and published in an English translation in *M.Q.R.* XIX, (October, 1945), 243-253.

"Babylon" is God's message to us to flee from the judgment which He will visit upon "Babylon and Egypt." This means that we must shun not only such wicked places as drinking houses but also "all popish and antipopish church services." The whole world of unbelievers is an abomination to God; it hates those whom Christ has set free from the bondage of the flesh and fitted for God's service. Those who belong to Christ cannot employ the methods of the unsaved, the use of worldly weapons, for example. (5) The Swiss Confession of Sattler recognizes only one officer in the local congregations of the Brethren, the "shepherd" *(Hirt)*. He is to be a man of blameless life, one with a good report among those outside the Brotherhood. His duty is to read the Word, to teach and admonish the Lord's flock, to warn against sin, to discipline the careless, to excommunicate those who refuse spiritual help, to offer public prayer, and to preside at the breaking of bread. Although the Swiss Brethren condemned the stipulated salaries of the state church clergy they did believe in the brotherly support of their nonprofessional pastors. (6) One of the major emphases of the Swiss Brethren was the doctrine of absolute love and unqualified nonresistance. The Brethren conceived of a sharp distinction between the church and the state as to function, method, and personnel. The Christian shall follow resolutely the suffering Saviour, even to death if needs be, rather than stoop to less than the loving and redemptive attitude of Christ. The Lord Jesus also refused to entangle Himself in such civic affairs as the dividing of an inheritance, and we shall therefore do likewise. As far as the sword of the Mosaic theocracy is concerned, that passed in the New Covenant not to the church but to the civil magistracy. The spirit and letter of the entire New Testament call the Christian away from the employment of carnal weapons to the life of suffering which being a Christian entails. Since in the New Testament the state and the church are sharply in contrast, even the office of the magistracy is forbidden to the Christian. The Brethren reason thus: ". . . It is not appropriate for a Christian to serve as a magistrate because of these points: The government magistracy is according to the flesh, but the Christians' is according to the Spirit; their houses and dwelling remain in this world but the Christians' are in heaven; the weapons of their conflict and war are carnal and against the flesh only, but the Christians' weapons are spiritual, against the fortifications of the devil. The worldlings are armed with steel and iron but the Christians are armed with the armor of God, with truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation and

the Word of God. In brief, as is the mind of Christ toward us, so shall the mind of the members of the body of Christ be through Him in all things . . . ."[4] (7) The last article is devoted to the swearing of oaths. The Brethren stand squarely on the word of Christ to swear not at all. With keen insight they show from Matthew's Gospel that it is not becoming for finite creatures to swear. God, to be sure, swears by His own self because He is infinitely able to fulfill His promises. But since we are not able to do even the tiniest thing of ourselves—to make one hair grow white or black—we should refrain from swearing any kind of oaths. Lesser oaths are wrong because ultimately they involve the real oath, that sworn by God. All oaths are improper for finite creatures.

One of the most significant tracts of the Swiss Brethren is entitled, *Von der Gnugthuung Christi.*[5] The title would suggest that the author is writing of Christ's atonement. But actually it is a treatise on the essence of true Christianity. To whom do the blessings of the atonement apply? Who actually is a true believer?

The author, perhaps Michael Sattler, first condemns sharply the Catholics whom he labels "works saints." He charges them with promising "salvation or the forgiveness of sins through works apart from faith, that is through the supposed possession of works, and thus [they] veer to the left, preaching works, paying no attention to a constant faith and not wishing to see or hear of a faith which is sufficient unto salvation: all their works are like wild plums, that is, ceremonies devoid of faith." He then turns on the Protestants, denounces them as "scribes," and charges that "although they have kept clear of [building on] works yet they veer to the right and under the name of Gospel teach a faith without works, taking the poor and obedient Christ . . . as their *Gnugthuung* . . . . All their preaching and fruit are like prickly thistles; they have much to say regarding faith, and know neither what Christ nor faith are; they reject works without faith in order that they may set up faith without works . . . ."[6]

It is because of these severe criticisms both of the Catholic and of the Protestant state churches that the Brethren made it a point to shun all their church services. This shunning is defended at length in the Anabaptist tract, *Von hörung der falschen Propheten oder*

[4] *Ibid.*, 251.

[5] Edited and published in an English translation in *M.Q.R.* XX (October, 1946), 243-254.

[6] *Ibid.*, 252.

Widerchristen,[7] an anonymous treatise. The author laments that both the papists and Lutherans are "preachers who proclaim letter for spirit, yea, human commands for God's commandment." The author protests violently against the suggestion that one can safely expose himself to such preaching without ultimately suffering spiritual damage. As illustrative of his point he quotes a proverb, "One dare not set the louse on the fur; it will soon be inside!"

Another tract entitled, *Von bösen Vorstehern,*[8] is a plea to beware of leaders who minimize the gravity of the spiritual issues facing the Brethren, claiming that it is legitimate to "hear the papish or Lutheran sermons," and "that infant baptism is an indifferent matter." This shows, declares our tract, "that they are in league with the Lutherans," and that they are seeking to avoid the believer's cross of persecution and suffering. The author states his purpose to be, "to warn all brethren and sisters in the Lord" that "they may not be led away from the hope placed before [them] through the false deceit and fickleness *(wanckelmütigkeit)* of [these] overseers." The writer probably has in mind men of the stripe of Caspar Schwenckfeld, Sebastian Franck, Hans Denck and Hans Bünderlin —mystics or semimystics who depreciated the necessity of a sharp break with what the Brethren considered a lukewarm and apostate Christendom, not a truly Scriptural Brotherhood.

In the brief tract, *Nota. Lassent die Kinder zu mir komen/etc., Mar. 10,*[9] the Brethren provide their own explanation as to why the state churches persecuted their Brotherhood: "Indeed, both the works saints [Catholics] and the scribes [Protestants] fight vigorously for infant baptism, not out of love for the children . . . but from roguery *(schalckheit)* . . . , and force, to uphold a false Christendom which they all got through setting up such a baptism. For Satan perceives well that as soon as a Brotherhood *(gemein)* is set up in which obedience to Christ is manifested . . . his darkness cannot stand any longer before such light, for it will soon be evident that his 'gospel' and 'Christendom' are the abomination of desolation."[10]

The beautiful little treatise, *Von zweyerley gehorsam,*[11] teaches that there are two types of obedience in the Christian life, servile *(knechtisch)* and filial *(kindtlich)*. This highly significant tract

[7] *M.Q.R.* XXI (October, 1947), 275-279, presents an English translation of and an introduction to this tract.

[8] *Ibid.*, 279-281. [9] *Ibid.*, 282-284. [10] *Ibid.*, 283.

[11] "Two Kinds of Obedience: An Anabaptist Tract on Christian Freedom," *M.Q.R.* XXI (January, 1947), 18-22.

must be read in its entirety to be fully understood and appreciated. It is an excellent refutation of the common misconception that the Anabaptists were legalists. It shows, on the contrary, that they lived their Christian lives in loving and personal obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, not on the level of impersonal law. The Anabaptists also recognized that their Christian lives had their ultimate source in God who was producing His fruit in them.

Although the Swiss Brethren were not Chiliasts they did have a deep eschatological consciousness. It will be remembered that in the *Brüderlich Vereinigung* the readers were reminded of God's admonition "to withdraw from Babylon and the earthly Egypt that we may not be partakers of the pain and suffering which the Lord will bring upon them."[12] In the tract *Von hörung der falschen Propheten oder Widerchristen* the author states bluntly that "the abomination is now becoming evident in the holy place (Daniel 9, 11) . . . ."[13] In the treatise, *Von bösen Vorstehern,* the Brethren describe themselves as those "who have departed from the desolation and abomination through the truth . . . ."[14] And in the discussion of Christ's *Gnugthuung,* after criticizing all of contemporary Christendom, the author writes:

> And how well one can see here the beast that hath seven heads and ten horns,[15] which hath again recovered from its deadly wound,[16] inasmuch as the Romish school or *Curia* from which the bread god[17] and infant baptism come originally, are again defended as the truth by the scribes.[18] I will not mention many other things in which the scribes hypocritically imitate the papists and establish them as Christian. But thus must the second beast with the two horns—that is, the gang of the scribes—cause the earth and the people thereon to worship again the first beast,[19] again establishing the papal oil idol, that is popery, casting down fire from heaven,[20] banishing and cursing every one who does not cleave to them—everything just as John had said beforehand [in the Apocalypse]. This is also just as he had seen in Revelation 17 where the ten horns on the beast would hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked, devour her flesh and burn her with fire,[21] seeing that God had put it in their hearts.[22] The kingdom would be given to the beast until the Word of God should be fulfilled.[23] Yea, those ten horns, who like kings should receive the kingdom after the beast, would be of one mind, would give authority to the beast, would make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb would overcome them.[24]
>
> This is how there should arise learned men *(Gelerten)* in the last days from all the higher schools, awakened through the Spirit, and the Romish

[12] *M.Q.R.* XIX (October, 1945), 249.
[13] *Op. cit.* XXI (October, 1947), 278.
[14] *Ibid.,* 281. [15] Revelation 13:1. [16] Revelation 13:3.
[17] Roman Catholic mass.
[18] By "scribes" the tract means Protestant reformers.
[19] Revelation 13:12. [20] Revelation 13:13. [21] Revelation 17:16.
[22] Revelation 17:17. [23] *Ibid.* [24] Revelation 17:13, 14.

church or fellowship *(gemein)* of works saints,[25] possessed of great zeal, would bring everything on itself and burn up what it had accumulated of money, silver and food, and damn them as heretics. But soon thereafter they[26] would fall back to the beast, that is, the Romish School, and defend it, and the kingdom of God which had previously come to them they would again cast away. Yea these [apostate reformers] would defend the beast and those who cleave to it against the Word of God and fight vehemently with the Lamb.[27]

Nevertheless, the Lamb who is a Lord of lords and the King of all kings will conquer them, together with His believers and called ones.

And would not this, together with the papists, be the abomination of desolation of which Daniel in the ninth chapter, Paul [in] II Thessalonians 2, Peter [in] II Peter 2, yea also Christ [in] Matthew 24, Mark 13, [and] Luke 17, clearly have spoken [of], [namely] where that one sits in the holy place, allows himself to be worshiped either for gospel or Christianity, according to which the works saints say, Lo, here is Christ! The scribes cry, Lo, here is Christ!

Therefore happy is he who departs from Babylon, that is, [who] neither believes the works saints nor the scribes, [but] submits with fear to the discipline *(Zucht)* of Christ,[28] because the heavenly voice [in] Revelation 18, Isaiah 52, II Corinthians 6, cries out and says, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, that ye receive not of her plagues, for her sins have resounded unto heaven.

This concludes a brief review of certain doctrinal features of Anabaptism as revealed in some of its earliest writings. I close with a few summary observations:

1. The Anabaptists were the most radical Protestants of the sixteenth century. They opposed Rome and Roman Catholic doctrine more thoroughly than any other Christian group.

2. The Anabaptists felt warm appreciation for the great work of the Protestant reformers in their early years of withdrawing from Catholicism.

3. Quite early the Anabaptists became critical of the Protestants for two things especially: the retention of the state church system and the continued practice of infant baptism. The former meant an institution lacking a Scriptural church discipline; the latter caused multitudes of unregenerate sinners to consider themselves as Christians and to be so regarded by others.

4. The Anabaptists were distressed and shocked that not only the Catholics but also the supposedly anti-Catholic reformers should use fire, water, and sword in an effort to destroy Anabaptism.

25 By "works saints" the tract means Roman Catholics.

26 "They" in this sentence means the learned Protestant reformers.

27 The tract is referring to the severe persecution of the Anabaptists by the Protestant state churchmen.

28 "The discipline of Christ" is an allusion to the church discipline practiced by the Anabaptists in obedience to the New Testament of Christ as they understood it.

5. The Anabaptists believed that the Christian life involved the complete abandonment of warfare, of the magistracy, and even of the civil oath. These views they based on Scriptural statements.

6. The issues which the Anabaptists faced, and the martyrdom of thousands of their spiritual brethren, forced them to an eschatological consciousness which saw the horrors of Daniel and the Apocalypse going into literal fulfilment. This fired them with zeal to stand true to Christ through the ordeal of suffering and to seek to rescue others from coming judgment. Witness their unique missionary and evangelistic zeal.[29]

7. The Anabaptists championed and demanded a high level of Christian living, the *Nachfolge Christi,* a vision obviously impossible of attainment in the *Volks- und Staats-Kirche* of Luther and Zwingli. This view of discipleship earned for the Anabaptists such epithets as *Schwärmer* and *Werk-Heiliger,* and it really constituted one of their major emphases. Compare on this point the exposition of the Lord's Prayer by Eitelhans Langenmantel, 1527,[30] and Martin Weninger's *Rechenschaft,* a vindication of Anabaptism, 1535.[31] Weninger's plea for holiness in the Christian life is superb. He concludes: *Der recht thut uss forcht Gottes ist Gott angenäm.*[32]

8. The Anabaptists differed from the Reformed chiefly in their conception of the church as a brotherhood of committed disciples of Jesus, of baptism as the symbol of this voluntary commitment, and of the Christian ethic as involving absolute love and nonresistance.[33] May this vision yet be fully adopted by Christendom.

[29] Cf. Franklin H. Littell's article, "The Anabaptist Theology of Missions" in *M.Q.R.* XXI (January, 1947), 5-17.

[30] Introduction and text in English translation in *M.Q.R.* XXII (January, 1948), 34-36, 40-42.

[31] *M.Q.R.* XXII (July, 1948), 180-187.

[32] *Ibid.,* 187. In English translation this motto would read: "Who does the right from the fear of God is acceptable to God"; that is, by God's regenerating power the Christian's heart can be so transformed as to love God and serve Him acceptably. Man is not so much a sinning child justified by imputed righteousness, although to a certain extent this remains true, as a transformed saint who has by God's grace been converted into an acceptable child. The Anabaptists did not contrast sanctification and justification as sharply as did the leading Protestant theologians; the Anabaptists emphasized redeeming grace in terms of the transformation of character and life more than in terms of a reckoned "standing" of justification. The contrast in emphasis between the Anabaptists and the Protestants was not absolute, yet it was a real difference.

[33] See Harold S. Bender's newly published monograph: *Conrad Grebel, c.1498-1526: Founder of the Swiss Brethren* (The Mennonite Historical Society, Goshen, Indiana, 1950) *passim.*

ANABAPTIST THEOLOGY IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN THEOLOGICAL TRENDS

Don. E. Smucker

I

Next to the New Testament times the Reformation was the most creative moment in the life of the Christian church. Centuries of spiritual frustration in the Roman church finally found expression in the audacity of Martin Luther. Vast historical forces were released with the initial break in the walls of the Roman citadel. By the very nature of things these forces were destined to be complex. The Lutheran revolt was unable to contain the Calvinist and Zwinglian revolt. By the same token the latter revolts were not able to satisfy the Anabaptists. Obviously the more radical and forthright reformation of the Anabaptists was bound to create a movement of similiar complexity, indeed, a configuration more complex than all other competing Christian groups. This was inevitable when the attack on tradition was so far reaching. Hence, a typology of Anabaptists includes in addition to the soundly Biblical party, chiliasm, pantheism, mysticism, and antitrinitarianism. These, to Luther, were the "Schwärmer."

Those of us in the soundly Biblical Anabaptist group (to use Newman's phrase) have sought various ways of expressing the heart of this emphasis. In my article in the January, 1945, *Mennonite Quarterly Review* I argued that the key was their rediscovery of the theology of the Bible. The Anabaptists of this party were thus a group of Bible students, mediating all insights concerning faith, ordinances, life, and death through the Scriptures. I went on to state that this was expressed in paradoxical form, avoiding the rigid monistic thinking of other groups. Finally, I said that the supposedly unique contributions of the Anabaptist-Mennonites were actually secondary; and that these secondary truths such as believers' baptism and separation of church and state were meant to keep the church on "track" of the really central realities of the Christian Gospel. Thus, it was an attempt to extricate the Gospel from man-made accretions by a radical application of Biblical authority. To thus extricate the church was to return to the original New Testament church of Christ and the apostles. In this sense it was a restitution of the early church. Insofar as Luther and Calvin originally meant to follow Biblical authority to a really

sharp break with European church tradition, the Anabaptists were the fulfillment of the original vision of these leaders. Elsewhere in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*[1] I have contended that Luther and Calvin never gave up the *Corpus Christianum*—neither at the beginning nor at the end of their work—hence the Anabaptists were not the fulfillment in every respect.

Somehow this sort of analysis leaves one rather dissatisfied. The reason, I think, is that our apparatus for analysis is too simple. With an over-simplified apparatus we tend to seize on only one aspect of the Anabaptist movement without getting a comprehensive picture. In a moment I want to suggest a more comprehensive basis for this analysis. But there is an additional problem facing us at this point. It is the impact of 400 years of experience in dynamic flow of history. As Jan. P. Matthijssen put it in his paper to the Mennonite Seminar at Goshen College, April 24, 1948, "Anabaptism is not a denomination and the several Mennonite denominations are far from being in a position to claim complete or even adequate congruence with their historical origin." Which is to say, that the so-called soundly Biblical Anabaptists of today no longer represent fresh outbursts of Christian life but, in some sense, are churches also overlaid with accretions of traditionalism which often make pretensions to ultimate spiritual sanctions.[2]

Therefore, our task is essentially the same as that of the original Anabaptists in placing all life under the judgment of Jesus Christ and the Holy Scriptures. But, unlike those of Switzerland and Holland of the sixteenth century, the heirs of the Anabaptists now have four centuries of tradition which must also stand under judgment. Reformation must be continuous since history is dynamic and fluxing.

Assuming, then, our own involvement in a tradition needing to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches, let us observe ten areas in which the Anabaptists made strong emphases:

1. The primacy of Biblical authority interpreted Christologically.

2. The nature of Jesus Christ as divine Lord and Saviour, revealing both grace and a pattern of living.

3. The nature of man as a fallen sinner desperately needing the salvation in Christ making possible the Christian life.

[1] *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (April, 1948), pp. 126-127.
[2] See Robert Friedmann's *Mennonite Piety Through the Centuries.*

4. The nature of the church as a gathered, responsible, disciplined, converted, suffering, mutual aid, apostolic, missionary brotherhood.

5. The nature of Christianity as discipleship.

6. The nature of Christian ethics as the all-embracing application of love and nonresistance.

7. The primacy of the local congregation yet with delegated authority to the elders; the validity of the ordinances symbolically yet without any meaning apart from faith and obedience.

8. The presupposition of religious liberty and toleration for interchurch relationships; with separation for church and state relationships.

9. The nature of theology as Biblical, covenantal, confessional, and unspeculative.

10. An eschatology of hope for the church and despair for the world with the presupposition that this is not to paralyze effort in the church, nor to open the doors to fanatical chiliasm, nor to destroy loving concern for the needs of the world.

This apparatus makes it more difficult to point to only one aspect of the Anabaptist vision as the key although H. S. Bender is right in seeing two main foci here: the nature of Christianity and the nature of the church. Yet to use all of these aspects of the movement will give us a much fairer and clearer picture of the situation then and our relation to it now.

II

Are there new factors in the Christian church today which qualify the validity of these ten Anabaptist affirmations? To what extent are these limited or dated by the sixteenth century? Are these truths accepted by the Christian churches generally? To what extent have they been accepted? If accepted, has it been with the help or without the assistance of the Anabaptist churches?

These are some of the questions which occur at this time. Perhaps the first requirement is to make a descriptive study of the church, at least in capsule form. Consider, first, the attempts of others to make generalizations about the church in our time.

1. *Adolph Keller,* well-known scholar and minister of the Swiss Reformed church, author of *Protestant Europe,* (1927) and *Amerikanisches Christentum Heute.* ( ) Seeking to summarize the impact of suffering on the European churches as well as the impact of leaders like Barth and Brunner in Switzerland; Bonhoefer, Asmussen, Niemöller, Dibelius and Diem in Germany; Kraemer

in Holland; Maury and Boegner in France; Billing, Nygren, Aulén and Rohde in Sweden; he lists four discoveries:[3] the Bible as the source of the spiritual life, the congregation as the nucleus and hope of the church, a new evangelistic concern, and the application of Biblical realism to education and social work. The new theology likewise has four characteristics: God transcendent in an eschatological vision; a Christ-centered theology of redemption; a responsible, existential theology rejecting pietism and quietism and accepting social and political tasks; a theology of the church rejecting mysticism and individualism for a brotherhood living under the cross. This summary refers to non-Roman Christianity.

2. President *John A. Mackay* of Princeton seeks to interpret Protestantism as a whole in Jurji's *Great Religions in the Modern World* (1946). He distinguishes two main types of Protestants: classical (Lutheran, Reformed, and Anglican) and radical (evangelical and humanist). Yet at the center is the emphasis on the supreme authority of the Bible and the unmediated Lordship of Jesus Christ. He names four recent developments of special interest: the rediscovery of Christian orthodoxy through the Bible as the written Word and Christ as the personal Word; the affirmation of evangelical catholicity that "where Christ is, there is the church" and that Jesus Christ Himself determines who belongs to the Holy Catholic Church; reawakened concern for the secular order; a demand for an ecumenical theology which is not doctrinal syncretism, theological dilution or pale lowest common denominator but a "full-blooded, loyally Biblical, unashamedly ecumenical, and strongly vertebrate system of Christian belief." Prerequisite is for the churches to "acknowledge their many sins and shortcomings, admitting freely that the church can sin and has sinned."

3. *Walter Marshall Horton,* Oberlin theologian, describes American Protestantism as a whole in the symposium, *Christianity Today* (1947). He lists: more unified and ecumenical, more group leadership and less dominance by a few great leaders, more Biblical and doctrinal and less emotional and activist, facing a more radically secularized and perilous situation and more conscious of the need of radical religious renewal than a generation ago.

4. *Clarence Bouma,* conservative Calvinist of Calvin College, surveys[4] the American scene from his perspective and finds

[3] *Journal of Religion,* XXVI (April, 1946).
[4] *Journal of Religion,* XXVIII (Jan., 1947), pp. 34-45.

Calvinist theology coming back. Niebuhr, Horton, Van Dusen, Fosdick, Morrison, Sorokin and Aubrey all say the same thing: man is in a horrible moral crisis and predicament. In essence, they have conceded the case for the sober anthropology of Calvinism. In explicit reply to Bouma a Presbyterian theologian, Joseph Haratounian, declares that while this observation may be true, Calvinism is not fundamentalism as Buma had implied.

5. *Harold John Ockenga,* in keynote addresses for the National Association of Evangelicals in which Mennonites participate as conferences (Mennonite Brethren and Brethren in Christ), as congregations, and as individuals, asserts that three main enemies, according to Ockenga[5], are the Roman Catholic church, liberal theology and secularism. The greatest weakness in fighting these enemies is the division of "Christians into denominations as they are today." The N.A.E. leader does not urge new denominational alignments or that individuals leave denominations affiliated with the Federal Council. Rather, he urges all Bible-believing Christians to band together in the N.A.E. on a broad doctrinal basis. Meanwhile the N.A.E. practical activities, despite the alleged differences in theology, roughly parallel those of the Federal Council all the way from radio to relief. Thus ecumenicity is growing among the fundamentalists of America.

6. *Carl McIntyre,* militant fundamentalist leader of the American Council of Churches, a rival of the National Association of Evangelicals, claims that Protestantism is suffering from the three-fold blight of modernism, pacifism, and socialism. Neo-orthodoxy is a new form of modernism, being heretically irrational as the older modernism was heretically rationalistic. Tactically the fundamentalists must separate themselves from any congregation or denomination which has false doctrine. False doctrine is defined in rigid Calvinistic terms with overtones of militarism and traditional views of social and political issues.

7. *Carl F. H. Henry* of Fuller Theological Seminary has written a book called *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (1947) which reveals some serious self-criticism among the fundamentalists of America. It is an argument against "the evaporation of fundamentalist humanitarianism," suggesting that conservative Protestantism can be true to its theology and still have a social message. Assuming it sets out to deal with social evils more forthrightly, he says it will soon discover the need for

[5] *Evangelical Action,* pp. 19-39.

greater unity. In effect this book pleads for a conservative social gospel buttressed by a unified "right wing" in Protestantism.

8. The research department of Columbia University has studied Muncie, Indiana, twice with microscopic vision. The results are found in two books, *Middletown* (1929) and *Middletown in Transition* (1937). The churches in Middletown consistently avoid controversial issues and appear worldly and ineffective. Halford Luccock read the book and observed, "Surely the church depicted in the Book of Acts was not meant to shrink into this puny, frightened thing." This follows the famous analysis in *Fortune* magazine (January, 1940) called "The Failure of the Church." This article sadly observed, "We are asked to turn to the church for our enlightenment but when we do so, we find that the voice of the church is not inspired. The voice of the church, today, we find, is the echo of our own voices. And the result of this experience is disillusionment." The support of slavery and the support of war are given as illustrations.

9. *Charles Clayton Morrison* of the *Christian Century* sees the American churches powerless to win America because of sectarian divisions, secular education, commercial entertainment and the threat of Roman Catholic imperialism which is moving toward the denial of religious freedom to non-Roman minorities.

10. *Kenneth Scott Latourette,* author of the seven-volume history of Christian expansion, is among the optimistic interpreters of the church today, at least for the Protestant churches. He sees diminished influence for the Roman and Orthodox churches in Europe because of continued disaster, and a stabilization of the Roman church here because of the lessened birth rate and no further immigration. Meanwhile, the Protestant churches, and especially the "left wing" churches of the United States, will be foremost in influence because of their strong missionary outreach based on American vitality and stewardship.

The spread of Christianity, he declares, is the most "amazing and thought-provoking phenomenon of history[6]." Christianity is still quite young and there is an ebb and flow in its movement. Despite popular conceptions the percentage of church members in the United States has reached an all-time high; likewise the numerical strength is an all-time high. Statistically speaking American Christianity is making an unabated advance. Spiritually speaking,

[6] Kenneth Scott Latourette, ed., *The Gospel, the Church, and the World* (N.Y., 1946), p. 84. Latourette's most recent book (1949) is significantly titled, *The Emergence of a World Christian Community* (New Haven, 1949).

Latourette admits that the increase in membership has been paralleled by a "rising religious illiteracy." Drawing much from Latourette and expressing a similar optimism in more explicit generalizations is the outlook of President H. P. Van Dusen[7] of Union.

11. Quite contrary to Latourette and Van Dusen is the report on the American churches by *Dr. Alec Vidler,* editor of the British quarterly, *Theology,* and supporter of the Anglo-Catholic party in the Church of England. After touring this country he wrote:[8] "The first thing that has struck me is that America is now much more religious than Britain. People here go to church much more, and I am told that church attendance has tended to increase since the end of the war. Your churches seem to be flourishing institutions, and they strike me, even if they do not strike you, as fabulously opulent." All this, continued Dr. Vidler, reminded him of the "prodigious religiousness" of nineteenth century Britain: "All that business and efficiency in organizing religious services and activities, served, I am sure, as a cushion against the hard impact of the living God. Our churches were like comfortable and well-managed religious clubs, in which we felt nicely at home, in which we felt good, in which we even wanted to be better, at least on Sunday evenings when singing particularly lush hymns." In modern Britain, times have changed: "While our churches are metaphorically if not literally falling into ruin, the disturbing and restoring presence of the living God is becoming an experienced reality amid the ruins . . . . In the U.S.A., it seems to me, the cushion of religious efficiency and prosperity is still doing its comfortable, but fatal work . . . ."

"But what shocks me the most," Dr. Vidler concluded, "is the character of the preaching that seems to prevail in your churches . . . . So far as I can ascertain, the paradigm of American preaching is: 'Let me suggest that you try to be good.' Moralistic homilies are still the order of the day. Who preaches sermons that are genuine expositions of the text and sense of Scripture, bringing to bear the great Biblical themes of God's judgment and mercy upon men who are dead in their complacency, self-confidence or pride? Your preachers . . . are still advocating justification by good works of one kind or another (maybe very orthodox or very 'Catholic' good works): they are not proclaiming the Gospel of salvation by faith

[7] *Princeton University Bicentennial,* Conference IV, "The Evolution of Social Institutions in America," Session 3, Panel 4, "The Ecumenical Movement in Its International Significance," Oct. 9, 1946.

[8] Originally published in *Christianity and Crisis* (1947), reprinted in *Time* magazine Jan. 5, 1948, pp. 40-42. For a radical attack on the church by an American Episcopalian see Bernard Iddings Bell, *The Church in Disrepute* (N.Y., 1943).

in Jesus Christ . . . . You are still preaching the Law, and a pretty easy-going or romantic Law at that."[9]

12. *R. Edis Fairbairn,* a minister of the United Church of Canada, has put into explicit words a judgment concerning the church as apostate. This was first declared in an article in *Fellowship* magazine (September, 1947) and very recently in a book with the title, *Apostate Christendom* (1949). He accuses the church of swinging like a weather-cock, going wherever the wind is the strongest. The clearest proof of the apostasy of the church is its constant support of war despite peacetime intention to avoid this unpleasant task. The discrimination against and purgation of pacifist ministers during World War II (especially in Canada) is outlined chapter and verse. Another case in point was the relation of the church to slave traffic earlier in American and English history. Thus Mr. Fairbairn sadly concludes:[10] "Christianity has reached such a degree of futility that men can be 'born again,' belong to the church, seek after holiness, support benevolences and charities, live at peace with themselves and die in hope of eternal salvation, without having once glimpsed what Jesus meant by the kingdom of God, or being confronted with His demand for the practice of His teaching, or realizing what is involved in His teaching."

13. Perhaps the freshest evangelical criticism of the church has been made by *George MacLeod,* Scotch Presbyterian minister who heads the Iona Community which spearheads genuine revival in Scotland. Dr. MacLeod's critique is as follows: At this time of genuine crisis the church is impotent. Yet the church was never so efficient, energetic, flexible or well-intentioned. The root difficulty is that the church is making a sectional, fragmentary appeal to modern man who wants a *total* answer. The medieval answer cannot give this. A Wesleyan individualist revival cannot do this. Only a radical re-expression of the Christian brotherhood can suffice whereby the total life of man is touched in the factory, market-place, field and forest. This must start with a genuine personal, evangelistic decision and then go on to far-reaching *koinonia,* a genuine extension of the Incarnation. Then the church, deeply devoted to worship, becomes the joyful mystery of Christ's presence. Now obedience becomes holy; discipleship real. A powerful return to Jesus Christ must be launched. At last love is practiced.

George MacLeod's great book, *We Shall Rebuild* (1944) does

[9] For a critical approach to church life in England by the Archbishops' Commission on Evangelism see *Towards the Conversion of England* (1945).

[10] *Fellowship,* Sept., 1947, p. 133.

not rest on any watering down of the supernatural faith of the Bible or any introduction of the old social gospel under new dress. It is as one reviewer said nothing less than a republication of the age-old faith in the Incarnate Lord as applied to the circumstances, needs and extremities of modern political and economic chaos.[11] It is hard to find a book or study a movement which strikes notes so similar to the early Anabaptists as the Iona movement in Scotland. It is also significant that George MacLeod is nonresistant even though this is not obligatory in the movement as a whole.

14. *Karl Barth's* view of the church, like all of his views, is striking and sometimes shocking. The following quotation from Barth's Gifford lectures express the very heart of his convictions: "Jesus Christ is the Lord and Saviour of the congregation. It is the congregation, as the congregation, which has to justify its activity to Him. The ecclesiastical order has its life solely in the congregation, but the congregation has not its life solely in the ecclesiastical order."[12] This Christocentric congregationalism strikes at all "high church" conceptions. But even more amazing is the fact that Barth and Brunner both reject infant baptism. This conviction, professed for some time, was finally elaborated in book form in 1948 under the title, *The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism* (Student Christian Movement Press, London). So serious has been the embarrassment of others who accept the traditional Reformed-Calvinist views of infant baptism, that *Theology Today,*[13] a leading neo-Calvinist journal here, has published a lengthy critical review of this book. The reviewer, Floyd V. Filson of McCormick Seminary, seeks to refute Barth by quoting from Oscar Cullmann also of the Basel faculty in Switzerland. Cullmann's *Die Tauflehre des Neuen Testaments: Erwachsenen und Kindertaufe* (1948) supports infant baptism. This is not the place to enter into the intricacies of this always complex argument. But suffice it to say that Barth, the leading Reformed theologian in the world today, has re-stated the Anabaptist view of baptism in virtually pure form.

Daniel T. Jenkins has suggested that Barth has made four contributions in his view of the church.[14] First Christ and Christ alone

[11] A group of American Christians, primarily Presbyterian in background, have started a community called Kirkridge deeply indebted to the leadership of the Iona Community. Further information about their pattern of discipline or a copy of *We Shall Rebuild* by George MacLeod may be purchased from them by addressing: Kirkridge, Witherspoon Bldg., Philadelphia, Pa.

[12] *The Knowledge of God and the Service of God,* (N.Y., 1939) 186.

[13] *Theology Today,* July, 1949, 262-268.

[14] *Reformation Old and New (A Tribute to Karl Barth),* F. W. Camfield, editor, 179-183. The Lutterworth Press, London, published this book in 1947 to present the appreciation of representative British theologians on the work of Karl Barth.

must rule the church. Because of the power of sin the church must make a more all-embracing effort to see that this takes place. It cannot take it for granted in the routine of services. It cannot keep Christ on the throne by conforming to all the progressive ideas of the *zeitgeist*. It cannot rely on a mechanical doctrine of apostolic succession. Only standing before the searchlight of the Word of God in the Scriptures can Christ reign in the congregation. Second, Barth declares, is the importance of justification by faith whereby each believer must find his vocation in responsible participation in the body of Christ. This is based on the recovery of true manhood and true freedom and a right relation to our neighbor. Third, church order is a divine ordinance which is designed to maintain men together in the Christian life in terms of their existence in this sinful world in which we live. Fourth, there is a strong affirmation that the Lordship of Jesus Christ is the sole basis for Christian action in a secular society.

At the Amsterdam conference and in subsequent debate with Reinhold Niebuhr, Karl Barth applied these convictions with real forcefulness. He demanded that Christians start with the kingdom of God which has come in Jesus Christ and then go to the disorder of the world rather than starting with problems and then taking them to Christ. He asserted the primacy of Biblical authority and the necessity of discussing questions in the light of careful exegetical, contextual Bible study. He called attention to the radically vertical dimension of grace, Holy Spirit, Word of God, and reconciliation, which come to constitute the third Biblical dimension which stands over two-dimensional thinking such as good and evil, freedom and necessity, spirit and matter and so on. Above all the church must not lose its joy, its sense of triumph now and at the second coming.

Niebuhr is primarily alarmed about Barth's alleged tendency to make the church an "ark, ready to receive those who are fleeing the next flood." While the church seeks to avoid a simple moralism it must also avoid a determinism coupled with irresponsibility. In short, he fears that the Barthian revolution is going to the extreme, having started by reminding us that we are men and not God, it is "now in danger of offering a crown without a cross, a triumph without a battle, a scheme of justice without the necessity of discrimination, a faith which has annulled rather than transmuted perplexity—in short, a too simple and premature escape from the trials and perplexities, the duties and the tragic choices, which are the condition of our common humanity. The Christian faith knows of a way

through these sorrows, but not of a way around them."[15] As for the issue of Scripture, Niebuhr declares that all texts of Scripture must be judged from the standpoint of the "mind of Christ." "We do that," he writes, "at our hazard of course; but the hazards of Biblical literalism are certainly greater."[16]

The issues stimulated by all this criticism and re-thinking of the church have been effectively summarized by Dean Clarence T. Craig of Drew Theological Seminary. His summary is based on a study of numerous papers on the nature of the church submitted for a study commission at the Amsterdam Assembly of Churches in 1948. Dean Craig points out that all contending parties believe their conception is Biblical. First, consider the seven points of agreement.

1. We all believe that the church is God's creation, not man's. God's design for the world includes the gathering of a people for Himself. This began in Israel, and was fulfilled in a New Israel.

2. We all believe that the redemption of this people centers in God's act in Jesus Christ, who died for our sins, was raised from the dead, and became the Lord of the church.

3. We all believe that the church is marked by the presence of the Holy Spirit, by the preaching of the Gospel, which is the Word of God's love for needy and sinful humanity, and by the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

4. We all believe that the church has been set apart in holiness as a worshiping community, to live in love according to the example and power of the crucified and risen Lord.

5. We all believe that the church is related to two worlds: she is composed of forgiven sinners, but at the same time her members are heirs of the kingdom of God.

6. We all believe that the church is served by a ministry which is equipped by God with various gifts of the Spirit for the building of the body of Christ.

7. We all believe that the church is one in very nature. Since God is one, there cannot be more than one people of God. This people is composed of all those whom He has redeemed in Christ.

Consider now the five points of disagreement.

1. The relation between the Old and New Covenants. All agreed there is some continuity between the covenants but there was

[15] *Christian Century*, Oct. 27, 1948, 1140.

[16] *Ibid.*, Feb. 23, 1949. There is no more illuminating theological debate in recent times than that of Barth and Niebuhr in the *Christian Century* as follows: "No Christian Marshall Plan" by Barth, Dec. 8, 1948; "We Are Men and Not God" by Niebuhr, Oct. 27, 1948; "Continental vs. Anglo-Saxon Theology" by Barth, Feb. 16, 1949; "An Answer to Barth" by Niebuhr, Feb. 23, 1949; "How My Mind Has Changed" by Barth, March 9 and 16, 1949.

strong disagreement on the extent to which this is true. Like the Anabaptist-Mennonites, some contended Christ was the end of the law; that the church is a new creation in Christ, that the New Testament (or Covenant) is a radical break in God's dealing with His people. Only a small minority, and yet a real minority, declared that this New Covenant demands nonresistance.

2. The extent to which the actual churches are the mystical body of Christ. The more formal churches believe that the actual churches are the body of Christ. Others are very hesitant to stress this figure because of its denial by the compromised life within the so-called body of Christ. In other words, the kingdom and the church are never identical.

3. The relation of Scripture as authority to church traditions as authority. All agree that Holy Scripture is authoritative, but some believe that the experience of the church under the Holy Spirit is just as authoritative, or, that it may be considered an extension of the original inspiration of Scripture. Others, Mennonites included, believe that there is no real authority outside of canonical Scripture; and that Jesus Christ is the Lord of the Scriptures. This is the most basic disagreement of any.

4. The location of authority for the local congregation. Some believe that every congregation is sufficient under Christ and subject to no church control beyond the congregation—control from the conference or higher church officials. Others are just as certain that there is need for authoritative government over individual congregations if their common purpose is to be realized under human conditions. On this issue the American Mennonites are divided with congregational, synodical, and episcopal (rule by bishops) patterns.

5. The relation of the church to the original twelve apostles. In what is known as apostolic succession, the Anglican and Eastern Orthodox declare that their ministry can be traced back in a very literal way to the apostles. Most of the other groups say that true continuity is directly with the Living Lord,[17] and that no claim of literal succession can assure a direct saving relationship with Christ who promised that where two or three are gathered together in His name there He will be present; and thus wherever Christ reigns in the hearts of men, *there* is the church.

This list is not exhaustive, of course. Those outside the ecumenical movement might add others like the inspiration of the Bible, the new birth, nonconformity, simplicity, the importance of the lay

[17] *Calvin Forum,* Feb., 1948.

ministry and the relation of the church to the state. The conflicts, as previously suggested, tend to revolve around the ministry and the sacraments. Connected with these two foci of conflict are the larger questions of the basis of authority and methods of Biblical interpretation. Protestants in the rigorist tradition are considered very liberal and even heretical in their rejection of sacramentarianism, apostolic succession and a more formal complex church organization. Despite the evangelical theology of the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition, the high churches would consider its other views regarding church order as opposed to historic orthodoxy.

Prof. John H. Bratt[18] has suggested three fundamental conceptions of the church which will help to locate the ultimate criteria by which the true and false are measured.

1. There is the "one-church" concept which identifies the church with a visible external organization whose center is Rome or Constantinople or London. Apostolic succession and the monarchial episcopate are the basis of this concept.

2. There is the "true-church" concept of the Lutherans and Calvinists. The church is not the external, visible institution as a whole. The true church is judged by three standards: (1) the pure preaching of God's Word, (2) the legitimate administration of the sacraments; (3) the exercise of church discipline. If these three are carried out, then this is the genuine church.

3. The "pure church" or gathered church of the early church and the Anabaptists. The church is a voluntary association of converted believers with a definite experience in Christ and a real obedience as disciples. Here the fruits of the Spirit become normative, stressing results rather than organizational standards.

Obviously there can be no traffic between the "one church" and the others. But "the pure church" and the "true church" can have real interaction. However, it is clear that the mind of the churches still is far from united in these matters, with the "pure church" concept in a distinct minority after its great impact in the fifteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, especially in English nonconformity and American Puritanism, pietism and peace church life.

III

We have now presented an outline of Anabaptist convictions, and an extended sampling of thinking concerning the status and

[18] For a free church critique of apostolic succession and similar issues see *The Nature of Catholicity* (London, 1942) by D. T. Jenkins; *The Witness of the Churches of the Congregational Order* (1940) edited by H. Paul Douglass; *Jesus and His Church* (N.Y., 1938) by R. Newton Flew; *Primer for Protestants* (N.Y., 1947) by J. H. Nichols.

role of the churches in the twentieth century. It is hard to draw clear conclusions from all this material. The following implications, however, do seem to arise from this survey.

1. The Anabaptist vision has exerted a great impact on the various churches but it has not been a decisive impact. For example, the witness concerning nonresistance has converted a substantial minority and pricked the consciences of those in the majority without basically changing their position.

2. The Christian church is everywhere criticizing itself, searching for a more satisfactory expression of the mind of Christ. The twentieth century may exceed all others in Christendom for its voluminous literature on the nature and meaning of the church. Never was there a more crucial moment to speak to the question of the nature of the church.

3. The development of missionary activity and the rise of church union movements are major characteristics of Christian life, bringing the churches into very close contact with one another. The denomination which identifies the Gospel with one culture, one language, and one geographical area is doomed to spiritual death.

4. The "high" churchmen fervently oppose simpler and more primitive forms of church order, ministerial leadership, and sacramental practice. Yet there is real power behind a simpler congregationalism, especially under the hammer blows of totalitarianism.

5. The evangelical theology of the Anabaptists has weathered the storm of modernism and humanism and is bound to have more inner vigor in the days ahead of theological reconstruction.

6. The social, political, cultural and military upheavals have placed a heavy premium on all forms of Christianity with a motive and a history of meeting human suffering and need. The warm Christian humanitarianism of the Anabaptist vision is particularly valid in our time.

7. The attacks on liberty coupled with the spirited defense of liberty have strengthened the role of the Anabaptists as the carriers of modern conceptions of religious freedom and the separation of church and state. The evil fruit of state churches and the value of the American experiment of separation seem much clearer after the first fifty years of the twentieth century.

8. Mennonite conceptions of the Christian's relation to the world at large have not impressed many Christians in other groups. One of the first books to evaluate Guy F. Hershberger's writings is *Christian Ethics and Social Policy* (1946) by John C. Bennett of

Union Theological Seminary. He calls the Mennonite strategy one of withdrawal, concluding: "This Mennonite strategy seems to most of us who assume full responsibility for the political order to be dangerously complacent and legalistic. It promises holiness to a limited group at the cost of evasion of one's responsibilities as a member of a larger community. Such holiness is itself illusory, for there is real participation in the sins of the larger community that is overlooked. Christians who withdraw from the world are guilty of sins of omission that involve responsibility for evils not prevented. When these things are said, I believe that there may be situations in which the Mennonite strategy would be the best available for Christians though they should always strive for a better situation which more possibilities are open."[19]

Prof. Bennett assumes that the major emphasis of Mennonite strategy is withdrawal rather than obedience or discipleship. If it is withdrawal, *per se,* this is illusory and false. If action is based on obedience and discipleship, then this is basically Christian. But the fact remains that the genius of this Mennonite position is hard to communicate to American activists. Only a vigorous missionary and service outreach will dispel this misconception of Mennonite life.

Thus, the tendency toward a closed culture, the tendency to avoid making a witness within the life of the churches as a whole, and the tendency toward asceticism, are some of the outstanding problems of those in the Anabaptist tradition in North America. The schismatic tendencies of the past century seem to be fairly well checked. Yet there is no clear ecumenical strategy among the Anabaptist-Mennonites, and only a limited communication with Protestantism as a whole. There are reasons to believe that the missionary motive will provide the driving power to overcome this failure.

While rejoicing in some of the larger victories of the church in our time, while admitting the richness of the Christian fellowship, the Anabaptist vision will continue to live in the modern world as a Christ-centered, Biblical Gospel based on a realistic view of man as sinner, a glorious vision of a missionary brotherhood, a warm love-conquered yearning to meet human need and to deny the rightness of carnal strife, a strong emphasis on vigorous congregational life, a lofty affirmation of religious liberty through a free church in a free society, a clear, simple Biblical theology climaxed by a balanced eschatology which sees Jesus Christ as Lord of the kingdom above history, within history, and at the end of history.

[22] John C. Bennett, *Christian Ethics and Social Policy* (N.Y., 1946), 45-46.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AND RESEARCH NOTES

AN ANNOUNCEMENT

Beginning with the January, 1950, issue a new department will appear regularly under the above title. In this department the REVIEW plans to give an exhaustive and up-to-date world report of all publications in the field of Anabaptist-Mennonite history, theology, and sociology. All books, pamphlets, and periodical articles will be noted as they appear, in whatever language. Most books and pamphlets will be reviewed later. Significant periodical articles will be briefly digested. A further department, "Historical News and Comments," will report significant items of news of activities in the field of historical, theological, and sociological scholarship including historical societies, libraries, archives, meetings, personal items, etc. The book review section will also be enlarged and the coverage made more comprehensive and prompt.

This service is offered through the collaboration of the editorial staff, which is enlarged by the addition of one new associate editor, Dr. Carl Kreider, Dean and Professor of Economics, Goshen College, and five contributing editors, Dr. Fritz Blanke, Professor of Church History at the University of Zurich, Switzerland; Dr. Ernst Crous of Göttingen, Germany, co-editor of the *Mennonitisches Lexikon;* Ds. N. van der Zijpp, Lecturer in Mennonite History at the Doopsgezind Theological Seminary, Amsterdam, Holland; Dr. W. H. Smith, Professor of History at Goshen College, and Professor J. G. Rempel, Mennonite Junior College, Rosthern, Saskatchewan. Dr. Gingerich, as managing editor, will be in general charge of the new departments. The field to be covered will be reported under the following headings by the members of the editorial staff:

I. *General and Bibliographies*—Bender

II. *Sixteenth Century Anabaptism*—Blanke, Teufel, van der Zijpp

III. *Regional History, Seventeenth Century to the Present*

1. *Netherlands*—van der Zijpp; 2. *Germany*—Crous; 3. *Switzerland and France*—Blanke; 4. *United States*—Gingerich, Krahn; 5. *Russia*—Krahn; 6. *Canada*—Rempel; 7. *Latin America*—Smith.

IV. *Special Topics*

Hutterites—Friedmann; *Amish*—Umble; *Sociology and Economics*—Correll, Fretz, Kreider, Hershberger; *Theology*—Wenger, Smucker; *Education*—Kreider; *Genealogy*—Gingerich; *War, Peace, and Nonresistance*—Hershberger; *Literature, Music, and Art*—Bender; *Colonization and Relief*—Fretz

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AND RESEARCH NOTES

I. General and Bibliographical

Recent Anabaptist Bibliographies

Apart from the bibliographies which have appeared in the past twenty-five years in monographs in the field of Anabaptist and early Mennonite history in such works as those by Correll, Horsch, Krahn, Smithson, Friedmann, and Bender, the general works by Smith and Horsch, and the articles in the *Mennonitisches Lexikon,* a number of valuable special bibliographies

have been published. These fall into two types, those which merely list titles, with or without brief annotations, and those which give an extended discussion of the major works in essay form, with a running critique and evaluation of the published products of original research or interpretation, indicating the progress achieved by the total forward movement of scholarship.

In the first category the outstanding contributions of recent date are those by Robert Friedmann, Karl Schottenloher, and A. J. F. Zieglschmid. Friedmann gives an exhaustive bibliography on the Austrian Anabaptists, with a section on the Swiss Brethren as connected with the Austrians, in his outstanding bibliographical article, "Die Briefe der Oesterreichischen Täufer IV Bibliographie," in *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* XXVI (1929), pp. 170-187. A. J. F. Zieglschmid attempted the same thing in his two editions of Hutterite chronicles: *Die Aelteste Chronik der Hutterischen Brüder* (Philadelphia, 1943), pp. 901-917, and *Das Klein-Geschichtbuch der Hutterischen Brüder* (Philadelphia, 1947), pp. 687-706. The second bibliography includes and enlarges on the first, offering about four hundred titles, almost identical in size with Friedmann's list. In fact, it is the Friedmann list supplemented by the more recent titles. Schottenloher's monumental *Bibliographie zur deutschen Geschichte im Zeitalter der Glaubensspaltung* 1517-1585, I. *Personen* A-L (1933), II. *Personen* M-Z, *Orte und Landschaften* (1935), III. *Reich und Kaiser, Territorien und Landesherren* (1936), IV. *Gesamtdarstellungen, Stoffe* (1938), V. *Nachträge und Ergänzungen* (1939), and VI. *Verfasser und Titelverzeichniss* (1940), covering everything to the end of 1937 (the announced supplementary volume to 1942 did not appear) gives full recognition to the Anabaptists under *Personen* as well as in Vol. IV, where the heading *Wiedertäufer,* pp. 734-752, contains ca. 370 titles, with 12 additional titles in the *Nachträge* (Vol. V) under the same heading. Schottenloher also attempts to be exhaustive and his five-volume set is a most valuable work though not fully exhaustive for Anabaptists. Roland Bainton's section on "Anabaptism and the Spiritual Reformers" in his *Bibliography of the Continental Reformation in English* (N.Y., 1935), pp. 31-36, gives only English titles. Cornelius Krahn's "Historiography of the Mennonites in the Netherlands" in *Mennonite Quarterly Review* XVIII (1944), pp. 195-224, is selective and goes much beyond the sixteenth century, while Wilhelm Pauck's "Historiography of the German Reformation During the Past Twenty Years" in *Church History* IX (1940), pp. 305-340, with its section on "Research in the History of the Anabaptists," pp. 335-340, is also selective but includes all languages. Both Krahn and Pauck are systematic but only slightly annotated. Christian Hege in *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* Vols. 2-5 (1937-1940) attempted an exhaustive coverage of current periodical literature on Anabaptist-Mennonite history (including also in the later volumes "kleinere selbständige Veröffentlichungen") arranged by years, beginning with 1936 and continuing to August, 1940, without annotations. See the numbers of the *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* for December, 1937 (pp. 77-78), December, 1938 (pp. 97-99), August, 1939 (pp. 59-62), and August, 1940 (pp. 60-62).

The second type of bibliography, the review-discussion type *(Literaturbericht, Sammelbericht),* is represented by two outstanding extensive contributions by Walter Köhler ("Das Täufertum in der neueren kirchenhistorischen Forschung" in *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 1940-48) and Eberhard Teufel of Stuttgart-Fellbach ("Taufertum und Quäkertum im Lichte der neueren Forschung") in *Theologische Rundschau* 1941-48, as well as four earlier discussions: Heinrich Bornkamm, *Mystik, Spiritualis-*

mus, und die Anfänge des Pietismus im Luthertum (Giessen, 1926), pp. 20-22; Christian Hege, article "Geschichtschreibung" in the *Mennonitisches Lexikon,* Vol. II (written in 1926); Harold Bender, "Recent Progress in Research in Anabaptist History" in *Mennonite Quarterly Review* VIII (1934), pp. 3-17; and Paul Dedic in *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* (1938) Vol. 35, "Forschungen zur Geschichte des Oesterreichischen Protestantismus. Sammelbericht über die Epoche 1918-1938. Täufertum," pp. 277-281, covering publications on Austrian Anabaptism 1918-1938. The discussions by Köhler and Teufel, both masters in the field, deserve a fuller report both because of their truly extraordinary extent (ca. 35,000 words and 65,000 words, respectively) and their exceptionally thorough and critical scholarly character.

It may seem strange that two such similar reports on the same general field should appear virtually parallel in German scholarly literature. However, the organization and approach of the two are somewhat different, and both are essential to the fullest information on current research and publication in the field of Anabaptist history, particularly since the first World War. Köhler's report appeared in four installments organized geographically except for the last section, "Die Spiritualisten," Vol. 41 (1948), pp. 165-186, which is organized by persons: Sebastian Franck, Dirck Coornhert, Sebastian Castellio, Jacob Acontius, and the Quakers. The three sections on Anabaptism are: "I. Allgemeines, Schweizerische Täufer," Vol. 37 (1940), pp. 93-107; "II. Das Täufertum in den Niederlanden, England, Frankreich, Elsass, Thüringen," Vol. 38 (1941), pp. 349-364; "III. Württemberg, Bayern, Mähren, Osterreich, Nord und Ostseeraum, Russland, Theologie der Täufer" Vol. 40 (1943), pp. 246-270. Teufel's report appeared in seven installments (the eighth and last covering recent American publications is soon to appear): Vol. 13 (1941), pp. 24-57, 103-127, 183-197, Vol. 14 (1942), pp. 27-52, 124-154, Vol. 15 (1943), pp. 56-80, and Vol. 17 (1948), pp. 161-181, organized as follows—I. "Die Entwicklung der Forschung seit G. Arnold" (5 pp.); II. "Zur Biographie einzelner Tauferführer (67 pp.), including David Joris (13), Menno Simons (7), Konrad Grebel (9), Pilgram Marpeck (10), Balthasar Hubmaier (14), and Hans Denk (14); III. "Zur Täufergeschichte einzelner Länder" (80 pp.), including "Schweiz" (16), "Herzogtum Württemberg" (11), "Markgraftum Brandenburg-Anspach-Bayreuth" (19), "Bistümer Eichstätt, Bamberg, Würzburg" (4), "Einzelne heute bayrische Reichstätte, Augsburg, Regensburg, Rothenburg o.T." (7), "Baden-Kurpfalz" (12), "Rheinland" (7), "Nord- und Ostseeraum" (4). Teufel gives an extensive bibliography at the outset, and at various places throughout adds further briefer topical bibliographical lists, in addition to titles in the text and occasionally in footnotes. Köhler gives no lists, and includes considerably fewer titles, both in the text and in the footnotes, but with most of his titles in the footnotes. Teufel includes several times as many titles as Köhler, but omits the "Spiritualists." (He had earlier reported exhaustively on Sebastian Franck in *Theologische Rundschau,* 1939 and 1940.) There is little in his whole report to justify the word "Quäkertum" in the title, unless this phase is to be treated in a later installment. Both Köhler and Teufel report at great length on certain key books and articles, using these works as the basis for a discussion of basic questions in the historical analysis and interpretation of Anabaptism. Both are fully aware of the American contribution to this field and include English titles as well as Dutch and Swiss in their discussions. Both men are also most sympathetic to the Anabaptist position. Köhler, who died in 1943, was the close friend of various Mennonite scholars, from 1936 to his death a member

of the board of directors of the German Mennonite Historical Society, and is reported by Teufel to have said on his deathbed that he would have preferred to die a Mennonite. Teufel, a retired Lutheran pastor, is now also serving on the board of directors of the above Historical Society and is actively associated with Mennonite scholars in the editing of the *Mennonitisches Lexikon,* the *Mennonite Encyclopædia,* and the *Mennonite Quarterly Review,* as well as in the forefront of the work for the publication of the *Täufer-Akten.* Teufel's own 177-page *Literaturbericht* is a remarkably rich, informative, and well-balanced contribution to the field of Anabaptist historiography, probably the most useful ever written.

Melvin Gingerich and Cornelius Krahn are publishing annually in *Mennonite Life* (North Newton, Kansas) April number, beginning in 1946, under the title "Mennonite Bibliography" a list of all books, pamphlets and periodical articles dealing with Mennonites and related groups. Articles in Mennonite periodicals are not included.

A chronological historical bibliography of writings by and about Anabaptists and Mennonites from the beginning to 1940 was prepared by the late Christian Hege before his death in 1942. The *Review* has secured the publication rights and expects to publish the sixteenth century section at an early date. A selective annotated Anabaptist bibliography will be published by the Mennonite Historical Society (Goshen) shortly.—*H. S. Bender*

IV. Special Topics

Recent Research in Amish Hymn Tunes

From its founding in 1927 to the present time, The Review has been publishing Old Order Amish source materials and articles covering historical, theological, sociological, economic, and literary phases of their culture. In the first issue (1927) the editor presented a transcription and translation of the Swiss Brethren Conference resolutions adopted at Strassburg which the Amish still follow literally and which have stamped their subsequent history with the marks of sixteenth century German peasant culture.[1] Later issues contained transcriptions of original German manuscripts of Amish formularies[2] and minister's manuals,[3] and case studies of Amish community and religious life,[4] as well as a bibliography of an Amish minister's collection of Amish manuscripts.[5]

Other contributions to an understanding of Amish life and culture are Arthur Kollmorgen's study of their economic life[6] and Calvin George Bachman's equally valuable and more comprehensive study.[7] Two books by

[1] H. S. Bender, "The Discipline Adopted by the Strasburg Conference of 1568," in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review,* I (Jan., 1927), 57-66.

[2] John Umble, "The Amish Service Manuals" in *M.Q.R.,* XV (Jan., 1941), 26-32.

[3] Umble, "Amish Ordination Charges," in *M.Q.R.,* XIII (Oct., 1939), 235-50 and XV (April, 1941), 95-117 and "Manuscript Amish Ministers Manuals in the Goshen College Mennonite Historical Library," XV (Oct., 1941), 243-53.

[4] Umble, "Amish Mennonites of Union County, Pennsylvania" in *M.Q.R.,* VII (April, 1933), 71-96 and VII (July, 1933), 162-90.

[5] Umble, "Catalog of an Amish Bishop's Library" in *M.Q.R.,* XX (July, 1946), 230-39.

[6] Walter M. Kollmorgen, *The Old Order Amish of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania,* U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, 1942.

[7] Calvin George Bachman, "The Old Order Amish of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania," *Proceedings of the Pennsylvania German Society,* 1942. For a sympathetic and appreciative review and discussion of this item see *M.Q.R.,* XVII, 207-36.

Joseph W. Yoder of Huntingdon, Pennsylvania,[8] are the most complete and intimate studies yet produced on the American Amish.

A regrettable gap in these studies of Amish life and culture was research into the origin and development of the hymns in the *Ausbund* and of the orally transmitted tunes to which the Amish sing them. The editors of the *Review* had the training in neither folklore nor music requisite for this task. From an address before the American Folklore Society in New York City in December, 1937,[9] many American folklorists learned for the first time that the hymns of the *Ausbund* and the tunes to which the Amish sing them provide a rich field of study for the folklorist, that many of the hymns show kinship to the early folk ballad style and that headnotes to the hymns suggest secular tunes to which they may have been sung. The German student, Wolkan, had stated in 1903 that the hymns in the *Ausbund* belonged to the best sixteenth century folklore tradition.[10] In 1929 a valuable study of Sixteenth Century Anabaptist hymns and hymn writers threw additional light on the provenance of the hymns.[11]

But certain questions remained unanswered: Could the text of the hymns in the *Ausbund* be related to sixteenth century secular prototypes? Do the Amish still sing their hymns to the secular tunes suggested in the headnotes? These questions, as will be pointed out later, belong in two different categories: the study of the hymns themselves lies in the province of the folklorist; a study of the tunes belongs to the musicologist. Several times the writer attempted to interest Mennonite graduate students in music at Northwestern University and at the University of Michigan in a study of the history of the tunes. But adequate materials for such a study did not exist until the appearance of Joseph W. Yoder's transcription of Amish tunes as the Amish in Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, sing them.[12]

Two comparatively recent studies by George Pullen Jackson of Vanderbilt University go a long way toward solving some of the mysteries surrounding the *Ausbund* and the tunes.[13] Jackson's training and interest fit him peculiarly for making a contribution in this field. Up to this time Amish hymns have been approached on one side by the folklorist interested in their literary aspects and on the other side by the musician interested in the tunes. Jackson's studies combine the literary-cultural, folkloristic aspects with a study of the tunes. His method is to lay the text of the Amish hymn side by side with secular songs and ballads as presented by Ludwig Erk and Franz Magnus Böhme in 1925.[14] He has found that some of the Amish hymns

[8] *Rosanna of the Amish,* The Yoder Publishing Company, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, 1940, and *Rosanna's Boys, do.,* 1948.

[9] The Society printed this address. See John Umble, "The Old Order Amish, Their Hymns and Hymn Tunes," in *The Journal of American Folk-Lore,* LII (January-March, 1939), 82-95. Several members of the Society showed great interest in the *Ausbund* and purchased copies for their own study and research.

[10] See Dr. Rudolph Wolkan, *Die Lieder der Wiedertäufer,* Berlin, 1903.

[11] Dr. Albert J. Ramaker, *M.Q.R.,* III, (April, 1929), 93-131.

[12] *Amische Lieder,* Yoder Publishing Company, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania [1942]. Reviewed in this issue by Mary Oyer.

[13] George Pullen Jackson, "The Strange Music of the Old Order Amish," in *The Musical Quarterly,* XXXI (July, 1945), 275-88, and "The American Amish Sing Medieval Folk Tunes Today," in *Southern Folklore Quarterly,* X (June, 1946), 151-57. The second article is well illustrated with four half-tones, a copy of one of Yoder's transcriptions ("Von Herzen Woll'n Wir Singen") and, for comparison, the tune of "Das jüngere Hildebrandlied."

[14] Ludwig Erk and Franz Magnus Böhme, *Deutscher Liederhort* (2nd ed.), Leipzig, 1925. Reference to early Anabaptist hymns is found also in Philipp Wackernagel, "Die Lieder der ersten Wiedertäufer," in the four-volume *Das deutsche Kirchenlied,* III

copy not only the meter and rhythm but in some cases the identical lines or parts of lines of secular songs well known in fifteenth and sixteenth century Germany. His study leads him to the conclusion that the hymns of the *Ausbund* draw "directly and deeply from the worldly ballad tradition" and that "some of them open with outright imitations of antecedent secular songs." He finds that the Amish hymns like the Luther hymns and tunes partake of the "lyric folk manner." Naturally the Amish hymns carry more marks of its "rural aspects."

Having satisfied himself on the question of the composition of the text of the hymns, Jackson proceeded to find an answer to a second question: Did the Amish use the tune suggestion given in the *Ausbund* and what has time done to the tunes? For an answer to this question he consulted Yoder's transcribed tunes. Here his first problem was to discover the original tune amid a "welter of what is rather vaguely called ornament." After a series of experiments with the tunes, he decided that each of the "measures" in Yoder's *Amische Lieder* represents a basic note. Following this line of study he, as "tunelorist," discovered a tune. Then comparing this tune, the one suggested at the head of the hymn in the *Ausbund*, with the tune of the same name in the three volume edition of Erk and Böhme, he discovered that five of the tunes recorded by Yoder in *Amische Lieder* are identical with the original secular combination used in the sixteenth century. A remarkably interesting discovery is that the "Hildebrandton" (the tune sung to the Hildebrandlied, a story at least 1100 years old), which German scholars had considered lost three centuries ago, is being sung by the Amish in America to their hymn beginning "Von Herzen woll'n wir Singen."

Further pursuing the above-mentioned method of finding the tune, Jackson learned that eight of the hymns in Yoder's *Amische Lieder* use the tune and text combination suggested in the *Ausbund* and that in five of these, the original secular combination is observed. Jackson's discovery of the relation of Amish hymns to the early German folklore tradition and his invention of a method for discovering the original tunes of the hymns in the *Ausbund* by using Yoder's transcriptions, combine to make a fine contribution to research on Amish origins and culture.

In the article in *The Musical Quarterly*, Jackson not only details and illustrates his method for "discovering" the tunes, but he also furnishes a table of "Amish Tunes and Old German Folk Melodies with Which They Show Greater or Lesser Kinship."[15] To complete the picture he adds a table of "Amish Songs Wedded to Folk Melodies Absorbed from American Environment." These latter do not seem to be used in the Amish church service, but several are used by the young people in their "singings" and at weddings. Jackson also suggests possible further studies in discovering relationships between Amish hymns and European antecedents. His studies suggest a new field of research for the Mennonite musicologist.—*John Umble.*

Leipzig, 1870), 440-91, and in Freiherr von Liliencron, *Zur Liederdichtung der Wiedertäufer*, Munich, 1875.

[15] Pp. 282 and 287.

Menno Simons (1496-1561) *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Theologie der Taufgesinnten.* Von CORNELIUS KRAHN, DR. THEOL. 1936 Druck und Verlag: Heinrich Schneider, Karlsruhe i.B., Pp. 192. $2.00.

Three competent modern scholars have given us biographies and interpretations of Menno Simons. The first, that by the Dutch historian Karel Vos, published in the Dutch language (*Menno Simons,* Leiden, 1914), the first scientific study of Menno, is valuable for the extensive and accurate data which the author was able to bring from his research in the Dutch sources in which he was a master, but is seriously defective in its interpretation of Menno's personality and theology. Even though Vos was a Dutch Mennonite pastor, he seems to write almost as an enemy of Menno, and his own theological position as an extreme modernist was a basic handicap. The second work, that by John Horsch in the English (*Menno Simons,* Scottdale, 1916), while sound in interpretation and particularly useful in correcting Vos's errors and in elucidating the main teachings of Menno Simons, comes short of being a well-rounded portrait and a fully integrated theological interpretation. The third biography, the one by Dr. Krahn, in the German, is the first wholly satisfying scientific work on Menno Simons, thorough in scholarship, combining a complete mastery of all that is known about Menno from the sources with a sound and sympathetic interpretation of his personality and a satisfying theological analysis. It will doubtless be the definitive biography of Menno. In his research the author had the advantage of working under the outstanding Dutch Mennonite historian, the late Prof. W. J. Kühler in Amsterdam, and the full use of the rich resources of the great Amsterdam Mennonite library.

The book falls into two parts: Part I, "Menno's Life and Work, Historically and Genetically Considered," and Part II, the systematic or theological section, almost equal in length to the first and bearing the title "Menno's Concept of the Church in the Framework of His Theology." The story of Menno's life falls into four natural chronological divisions: A. In the Service of the Catholic Church, B. Fight for the Christian Church in Writing and Speaking, C. Bishop of the Anabaptist Churches in the Regions of the Baltic Coast and the Eastern North Seacoast, D. Refuge at Fresenburg. In addition to an exhaustive discussion of Menno's personal experiences, his movements, his relations with his co-workers and his debates with his opponents, and his struggles in the leadership and organization of the Dutch-Northwest German Anabaptist movement, this section contains two valuable special topical discussions (Exkurs I & II) on "What Works of the Church Fathers and Contemporaries Did Menno Simons Read?" and "The First Writings of Menno." The latter is a particularly useful summary of the first nine treatises from Menno's pen.

The theological section also falls into four parts: A. Menno's Christocentric Interpretation of the Scriptures and His Eschatological Expectation, B. Concept of the Church, C. Effectuation of the Church, D. Effects of Menno's View of the Church on the Effectuation of the Church. The last section contains a third special topical discussion (Exkurs III) entitled "Menno's Concept of the Church Viewed in the Light of His Doctrine of the Incarnation of Christ." In the theological discussion Menno's views on the following subjects are included: new birth, baptism, Lord's Supper, footwashing, church offices, ban, shunning, oath, state, and nonresistance.

Throughout the discussion in both parts of his book, the author shows himself thoroughly acquainted with the pertinent literature, and in many detailed discussions of the views of other scholars on points in dispute gives the reader a valuable orientation in the present state of opinion on Menno. He is quite aware of the weaknesses of Vos, although his criticism is too gentle. In addition to an excellent bibliography and a brief index, a useful "Brief Introduction to the Historiography of the Dutch and North-German Anabaptists with Particular Reference to Menno Simons" is given. A complete chronological listing of all the editions of the various writings of Menno, and in all languages would have been very useful at this point.

We are greatly indebted to Dr. Krahn for this work, which is of distinct and solid merit. The biography itself is in every way reliable, incorporating new material hitherto unknown, particularly in regard to Menno's printery at Fresenburg (possibly Lübeck also). The theological discussion is also in general sound and the interpretations valid. Menno's concept of the church has been correctly placed in the center of his theology as its dominant and controlling idea; Menno's theology is described as "ecclesiocentric." This centrality of the church concept is characteristic not only of Menno but of all Anabaptism, and is a major point of difference from the theology of the reformers. As Dr. Krahn says, Menno broke completely with the churchly tradition, taking only the apostolic church as his norm for the reconstruction of the true church. The new birth is constantly emphasized as the essential condition for membership. The nature of the church is determined by the teaching of the New Testament alone. Menno rejects not only the traditionalism of the Roman church, but also the subjectivism of the radicals who claimed prophetic inner light from heaven, and the allegorizing and spiritualizing method of others. Only the "simple plain command" of Christ is to be authoritative. The key to the whole history of the Dutch-North German Anabaptism is Menno's decisive rejection of everything but the New Testament teaching with Christ as its center. For this reason Menno took I Cor. 3:11 as his motto. By this principle the influences both of Hofmann and the Muensterites, and of Sebastian Franck and Hans Denk was completely eliminated; only on this basis could Dutch Anabaptism be safely and securely established in the turbulent circumstances surrounding its origin.

Excellent as the discussion of Menno's concept of the church is, a further and deeper penetration into the roots of his thought would still be desirable. The reviewer is not altogether satisfied that the author has found the ultimate secret of the central idea and concern, not only of Menno, but of all Anabaptism. Was it purely a superficial Biblical literalism, a more or less blind following of the letter of the teaching of the New Testament and the example of the apostolic church, which dictated Menno's basic concept and gave him the powerful drive to action? Was Menno purely a Biblicist? Was it not rather Menno's goal to achieve in the church and its individual members the fullness of the holiness of Christ, so that in the body of Christ, the life and Spirit of Christ might be realized? Here is the point, though only in an indirect sense, where there seems to be some logical connection, if any at all, between Menno's peculiar doctrine of the incarnation and his doctrine of the church. To protect the perfect sinlessness of Christ he felt he had to deny any human inheritance through the sinful flesh of Mary, and he wanted the church as the body of the sinless Lord to be sinless also, hence the insistence upon the strictness of discipline, the demand for full discipleship, in order that the church might be "without spot or wrinkle." That there is danger of legalism and hypocrisy in working

toward such a goal is clear; but the ideal itself is not legalistic, it is Christ's own ideal. Here is the point where most students of Menno, including Vos and Kühler, have gone wrong. Menno did not teach perfectionism, as Krahn agrees, nor did he operate on a legalistic basis. He was not blind or foolish. He simply honestly attempted with all his heart and strength to accomplish the ideal of Christ himself, an attempt which Luther (and with him many others, including Menno's modern Dutch descendants) never made because he held it to be impossible to achieve. Here is the basic difference between the Anabaptists and all other major Christian groups, both Catholic and Protestant. They believed and practiced full discipleship, without compromise. More basic than their concept of the church was the concept of discipleship. This does not mean that these concepts were in conflict or separated from each other, for discipleship was not only for the individual but also for the group, and supported and controlled by the group. Menno's ultimate purpose was to achieve holy living. It is this basic concept and its logic which does not receive adequate recognition in any of the biographies, not even in this best of all the biographies. We miss in its treatment the clear formulation of Menno's deep concern for holy living, his insistence upon a productive faith in contrast to the more subjective and theological faith of the Lutheran, for instance, for whom the goal of faith is forgiveness and justification more than sanctification. For the Anabaptists, Menno included, the goal of faith is sanctification in its full meaning. Dr. Krahn points out the greater similarity between the Anabaptist and the Zwinglian-Calvinistic attitudes on this point, showing clearly also the difference whereby the Old Testament is included in the Calvinistic basis, in contrast to the "New Testament only" of the Anabaptists. Thus, in spite of the fact that Anabaptism is nearer to Calvinism than Lutheranism, there is still a considerable distance between them.

It will not detract from the general excellence of the volume's theological analysis to suggest some minor points which the reviewer feels require a slightly different interpretation or emphasis. For instance, in the matter of an apparent inconsistency on Menno's part (p. 148) in rejecting the regular salary of a preacher and yet indicating in a letter to one of his co-workers that he requires 60 guilders yearly from the church, might not the best answer be that Menno rejects the "salary" of the "worldly" state church, but accepts the policy of support of preachers by the true brotherhood? Again, the insistence in Exkurs III, that the peculiar doctrine of the incarnation held by Menno had a vital influence on his doctrine of the church, is not convincing. In the reviewer's judgment Hoekstra and Horsch were more nearly right in holding that the incarnation concept was a side issue, and of no great significance in Menno's general thought. This is not to deny that Menno considered his view important. It is very doubtful, however, that there is actually any causal connection between this view and Menno's other major teachings.

The assertion (p. 163) that the character of the polemics in Menno's writing is quite the same in tone and form as that of his contemporaries is quite astonishing. Luther certainly outdistanced Menno considerably in bitterness and coarseness. That Menno held it to be the duty of the state to "remove blind and false teachers" from their position in the church (p. 168) is also surprising. Menno would scarcely have asked the state to do this in the church of which he was the elder, regardless of what he said on the general duty of the "princes" in the citation quoted.

The discussion of the relation of the church to the social order (169-177) is well done. Dr. Krahn sees clearly that Menno was struggling to work out the problems which arose in the application of his basic concept of a holy church separated from the world and did not always come to an absolutely clear and consistent formulation. However, in all major points Menno's attitude was clear and consistent. The author is in danger of creating a false impression in saying that nonresistance and nonswearing of oaths were not present in the beginning as developed principles (p. 171) or that they are not found among Menno's six marks of a true Christian church, or that the concept (*Begriff*) of nonresistance is not found in Menno (p. 172). If he means only to say that our modern formulation or terminology is not found in Menno, he is of course right. But in no sense can it be said that Menno was in doubt about the principle of nonresistance or its practice. A number of other important teachings are not to be found listed in the six characteristics of the true church, but are nevertheless clearly taught and held by Menno. Menno may have left to the individual conscience the matter of serving as a government officer, but since he made the condition that the office dare not be connected with the shedding of blood, he went far toward eliminating the most common governmental offices from the Christian's choice. Modern nonresistant Mennonites also have no objection to government service which shares no responsibility for the use of force or bloodshed.

The reviewer would agree, in conclusion, with Horsch (see M.Q.R., July, 1947) that Menno does not "speak of the Millennium" (Krahn, p. 112) at all as an idea which he himself holds; that Menno does not call the Muensterites his "brethren"; that he could scarcely have been baptized nine months before he withdrew from the Roman church (p. 30), for how could he have continued to hold the office of priest and perform the ceremonies of that office after accepting baptism by Obbe Philips, in the light of his own concept of the meaning of baptism?

Goshen College Harold S. Bender

Amische Lieder. By Joseph W. Yoder, Published by The Yoder Publishing Company, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, 1942. Pp. xii and 114. $1.50.

Joseph W. Yoder, author of *Rosanna of the Amish* and, more recently, *Rosanna's Boys,* designed in 1942 a collection of Amish songs for the Amish people. *Amische Lieder* represents the first notation of the tunes for Amish hymns; the *Ausbund* contains only texts.

Amische Lieder divides itself musically into three sections. The first contains the slow tunes which Mr. Yoder has transcribed by ear. His task was difficult because of the complete absence of meter and the slow tempo, which is a part of the Amish style. He uses as many as four note lengths in a number. The bar lines are no indication of meter, but rather, separate one syllable of the text—with its most important note and accompanying embellishments—from the next. Of course there is no attempt to harmonize these melodies because the Amish sing always in unison. The author transcribed these tunes in the Kishacoquillas Valley, Mifflin County, Pennsylvania. Of the thirty-six slow tunes in the book four were transcribed in 1907, one in 1910, and the remainder in the years 1940 and 1941. All of the slow tunes to be sung in the church use words from the *Ausbund.* A few of the wedding songs to be sung at the table are taken from *Das din Büchley.* Eight of this latter type are metrical.

No doubt it is the free rhythm and the embellished nature of the music which led the author to suggest that Gregorian chant was the origin of these tunes. This, however, is not the source. George Pullen Jackson, in the July, 1945, issue of the *Musical Quarterly* points out that "most of the prototype tunes date from the second half of the sixteenth century and early decades of the seventeenth."

The second section contains songs used on more informal occasions. The seventeen familiar and thirty-three new songs all come from texts in *Das din Büchley*. They are metrical and for the most part German versions of common English hymns—some quite inferior in musical value. Since these hymns have been borrowed from other Protestant churches, they are not at all characteristic or expressive of the Amish people.

In the third section the author explains the rudiments of music—scales, solmization (do, re, mi system of sight singing), the "Buckwheat" notes used throughout the book, and meter. He points out, by means of simple exercises, the early steps in learning to read music.

In his preface Mr. Yoder presents two purposes. First he hopes that through the use of *Amische Lieder* Amish settlements everywhere will adopt the original tunes and the original style of performance of their forefathers. Although such an objective would prove beneficial if the Amish were to gather in a general conference, it is hardly necessary or even desirable in the present situation. Amish hymns are folk music in that they have grown from the people and have developed and evolved as the people's attitudes have changed—insignificant as such change may appear. Any reversion to an archaic manner would be a contradiction of the nature of folk music and a practical impossibility. Amish music is functional and highly expressive of the whole Amish cultural pattern. Any attempt to standardize the tunes and performances reduces the spontaneity and expressiveness of the present singing.

The author's second purpose is to make it possible that more hymns be used and that they be learned quickly. This objective has much value for the Amish. One man said, "By using your book my little family and I can learn any one of the slow hymns in ten minutes; before we had these notes it took us ten weeks and much longer." To the musicologist, this testimony is reminiscent of that of singers living in the eleventh century. At that time developments in notation and the creation of solmization made it possible "to learn in five weeks what before had taken ten years to accomplish."

His intimate and sympathetic contact with the Amish people, combined with his musical ability, has enabled Mr. Yoder to make a valuable contribution to his people. He has given them opportunity to expand their present limited repertoire. He has recorded and preserved an unusual cultural heritage; and although his purpose was not to reach the outside world, he has definitely provided rich source material for the musicologist and the lover of folklore. Mr. Jackson made his discoveries concerning the sources of the tunes through a study of *Amische Lieder*. Other research problems might well be pursued with *Amische Lieder* as the basis for study.

Of interest to the student of Amish music are the two collections of recordings of Amish singing. One of twenty-one numbers recorded in Iowa by John Umble and Leland Byler is in the possession of Professor Umble at Goshen College. The other, of twelve numbers, was recorded in Indiana by Allan Lomax for the Library of Congress. These collections duplicate some of the texts in *Amische Lieder,* but the tunes differ somewhat in each locality.

Goshen College Mary Oyer